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ONE AND A HALF

IN

NORWAY

A CHRONICLE OF SMALL BEER

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a

BY

EITHER AND BOTH

W.C.57

LONDON
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE
1885

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PREFACE

"I DON'T think I like the title at all," said the *Half*, reflectively; "it sounds so absurd. People won't know what you mean by 'One and a Half;' and why on earth do you call it a 'Chronicle of Small Beer'?" "The success of a book," replied *One*, dogmatically, "depends in no small measure on the selection of an attractive title, and if it sounds mysterious, so much the better; for thereby will much curiosity be excited, and an experienced angler will tell you that inquisitiveness leads the finny victim to its doom quite as often as the more powerful though less easily aroused impulse of a voracious appetite. Besides, is not 'Three in Norway' a most charming book, which has achieved an almost world-wide reputation? Following humbly in

the track thereof, with even exaggerated oddity, may we not hope for a share, however slight, in the beams of its popularity?

"As to its being a 'Chronicle of Small Beer,' is not that the very epithet the critics, if it should ever be subjected to their tender mercies, will rush to apply to it? and shall we not, by thus assuming a humility if we have it not, at once deprive them of the keenest arrow in their quiver, and at the same time ensure a pleasant surprise to the reader in the sparkling pages that follow?

"Go to! The title is well enough. The explanation thereof will appear anon to the patient reader; and if the chronicle succeeds in describing half the pleasure we experienced from our sojourn in 'Norroway over the Foam,' be assured that many will be found to follow in the footsteps of

'ONE AND A HALF.'"

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION	ix
I.	THE VOYAGE	1
II.	MOLDE AND ITS ENVIRONS	18
III.	VEBLUNGSNÆS AND THE ROMSDAL ...	25
IV.	HELLESYLT AND THE GEIRANGER FIORD ...	54
V.	BERGEN AND THE NÆRODAL	101
VI.	OVER THE FILLEFJELD	129
VII.	HÖNEFOS AND CHRISTIANIA	148
VIII.	CONCLUSION	167

INTRODUCTION.

IT is, we believe, usual in works of this description, to give some account of the geography, history, and literature of the country about to be visited, with other statistical information likely to be of service to the traveller, which may be briefly summarized as follows:—

Geographical Features.—Norway is an important country, situated, as its name implies, in the Norway'st of Europe, of which it forms the upper left-hand corner. It is closely united, geographically as well as politically, to Sweden; so closely, in fact, that the two countries have only one backbone between them—a range of mountains known as the Dovrefjeld.

Its coast is deeply indented, containing just as many bays, creeks, and inlets as could be inserted without cutting it up into islands. As it is, a great number of portions have become detached, and form an advanced guard of rocky islets, apparently thrown out as skirmishers to repel the ever-threatening attack of the turbulent North Sea.

Mountains and Rivers.—The whole of Norway may be said to consist of mountains, just enough space being left between them to accommodate the rivers, in some parts the crowd being so great that the mountains have to be placed one on the top of the other.

The rivers are not navigable, except for salmon, and even for them the course is much impeded by nets.

The geographical features of the country may thus be summed up in three words: "fjords, fjelds, and fosses;" that is to say, "bays, mountains, and torrents."

Language. — The language of Norway is exceedingly simple, consisting principally of shaking hands.

The following are the principal words in use by foreigners :—

Vaerelse,	A room.
Spise,	Something to eat.
En Flaske Öl,	A bottle of beer.
Hest,	A horse.
Strax,	Immediately.
Betale?	What's to pay?

No others are necessary. For conversational purposes, the interjection, "Jasaa!" (pronounced *Yahso!*) is all-sufficing.

Literature.—By far the best guide-book is Bædeker's; Bennett's is good, but is designed more particularly for the use of carriole travellers, and gives little description and no maps. Both will be, to a great extent, superseded by the present work.

History.—In early times Norway was inhabited by a race called "Vikings," not because

they were kings in any sense of the word, but because they infested the numerous "viks," or creeks, in which the coast abounds, from which they issued forth from time to time in well-armed galleys to plunder and harry in all directions. These Vikings were glorious-looking fellows, consisting principally of long tawny moustaches and flowing locks, and were continually drinking "skall," and having a good time, being pretty generally adored by the school-girls of the period. They are now very scarce, and there is no skall to be had in the country.

In 1397, Norway was united to Denmark, remaining a province of that country until 1814, when it was ceded to Sweden, of which kingdom it still forms a part, although the tendencies of the inhabitants are strongly republican. In the summer of the present year, 1884, it was invaded by hordes of swaggering Germans, animated ostensibly by a deep love of "die schöne Natur,"

but evincing an unbounded admiration for the extensive coast-line, which, in these days of "Teutonic extension," was distinctly ominous.

Coinage.—The coinage is decimal and principally nickel, and the change for half a sovereign in small money would have to be carried about in a wheelbarrow. The following are the chief denominations :—

1 Krone	=	1 box of Cockle's Pills * (*i.e.* 1*s.* 1½*d.*).
½ Krone, or 50 Öre	=	*say*, sixpence.
25 Öre	=	a liberal threepenny bit.
10 Öre	=	a penny, and a fraction over.
1 Öre	=	$\left(\frac{\text{Cockle's Pills}}{\text{The Box}} \times \frac{1s.\ 1\frac{1}{2}d.}{100}\right) = \cdot 135d.$

The coinage will be found to be much simplified by the foregoing liberal method of computation. The half krone and the "threepenny bit" are very useful as tips; the former for a "pige," or maid-servant, and the latter for the postboys. The indiscriminate use of tips is,

* A cheque may be sent to the publishers, payable to "One and a Half."

however, to be deprecated, as many little services, which in other countries proceed from a mercenary motive, are here rendered out of pure good nature, to offer payment for which would almost amount to sacrilege.

Natural History.—Reindeer are frequently met with in the form of steaks, in which they can be highly recommended. Bears are often heard of, but seldom seen; and insects, with the exception of mosquitoes, which are sometimes encountered in the more sheltered valleys, are conspicuous by their absence.

Products.—1. Beer (capital beer!).

2. Salt fish.

The rest are unimportant.

Means of Locomotion.—These are three in number, excluding Shanks his mare:—

1. Carrioles—two-wheeled vehicles of slender construction, called "carrioles" because they only carry *one*.

2. Stolkjærres—that is to say, "stool-cars," a

sort of cross between a costermonger's barrow and a market cart.

3. Steamboats—when you can catch them. The amount of railway is so limited as to be hardly worth mention.

This is all the information respecting the country necessary to start with, and we will now proceed to the description of our journey, in the course of which much more novel and interesting matter will appear.

ONE AND A HALF IN NORWAY.

CHAPTER I.

THE VOYAGE.

WHEN Dick proposed going to Norway for our holiday, I first gasped, and then, wife-like proceeded to raise objections. First, a dreadful sea-voyage—visions of arriving hollow-eyed, hollow-cheeked, and, in fact, hollow altogether. Then, imminent starvation—nothing to eat but "fladbrod," nothing to drink but sour milk. Then, toil and discomfort—jolting along all day in carrioles and stolkjærres, to court repose at night in beds too short for anything but a

hedgehog; heat and mosquitoes; cold and chilblains; the country overrun with tourists flying from cholera and quarantine; and finally, bills of portentous magnitude! All these objections were combated by Dick, with the persistency of purpose which characterizes mine, I have no doubt in common with other husbands, and resulted in his steadily reading up Bædeker, Bennett, and any other literature he could get hold of on the subject, and, after wearing off his few remaining hairs in selecting a route, finally announcing that berths were secured for Throndhjem, *viâ* Hull, on July 10.

The die thus cast, preparations commenced in earnest. Innumerable necessaries were purchased and stowed away in the one portmanteau which Dick declared would hold all and more than all we could possibly want, many of them never to see daylight again till our return to our native shores. Waterproofs and soap, straps and string (in case of the harness breaking,

you know), toothbrushes and insect powder, and every conceivably possible necessary were crammed into that unlucky portmanteau, to which we were soon to bid a long and unlooked-for adieu. At last the eventful day arrived, and taking our seats in the 10.30 express from King's Cross, we reached Hull at half-past three in the afternoon.

The *Tasso* was to sail at 6.30; so, having put our luggage on board, and exchanged shudders at the sight of the comparatively tiny vessel in which we were to brave the terrors of the North Sea, we strolled away from the quay to make a few final purchases, and to taste such delights as the good town of Hull had to offer to us.

Dick quoted a profane but expressive Yorkshire saying, often applied to three places of which Hull holds the foremost position, which found a heartfelt echo in our bosoms long before our brief stay was over. "'From Hull, Hell, and

Halifax, good Lord, deliver us!' say the tykes. "I don't know anything about the two latter places," said Dick, "but I wouldn't mind giving either of them a turn in preference to this!" Dull, dirty, and depressing were adjectives that rose spontaneously to the lips after half an hour's plunging about the sloppy streets, and we regained the despised *Tasso* with a feeling of thankfulness that she would soon bear us away from this uninviting locality.

Down the Humber we steamed at last, the passengers eyeing each other with the distrustful air exhibited by a couple of strange dogs shut up together in the same room, and the steward's tardy call to supper was hailed as a blessed relief from the damp and drizzle on deck. The morning broke bright and sunny, and the passengers, who were only sixteen in number, having once more broken bread together, and, as to the male portion, lighted up the festive pipe, began to thaw towards each other, and to

realize that at least we could not all be escaped convicts, and by the time we sat down to dinner we were quite a friendly party. Certainly a pleasanter set of people we never met, and much of the subsequent pleasure of our tour was due to the advice and introductions most good-naturedly offered by our more experienced fellow-travellers.

The first day the *Tasso* behaved herself very well indeed, and all went merry as a marriage bell; but when we lost the friendly shelter of the Scottish coast, and began to feel the "long stern swell" that marks the northern sea, the good ship lost her self-respect and began to act much like an intoxicated corkscrew, worming her way along with a sickening roll, which tried the strongest heads amongst us. The dinner that day was a sight to see, though witnessed but by few. The captain waltzed gaily round a shoulder of mutton, brandishing his carving-knife, and occasionally succeeding in hewing off

a slice, the entertainment being varied by the shoulder of mutton waltzing round the captain, and bedewing us liberally with gravy in the operation. One plucky individual took his dinner by instalments, retiring to the deck after each course, only to return doggedly to the charge. At last he conquered, and fully deserved his success. Verily, greater is he that ruleth his own stomach than he that taketh a city!

Captain L—— being jestingly remonstrated with on the conduct of his vessel, and asked if he could not contrive something to put a stop to her erratic movements, replied that the same question was once put to him, when he was mate on board an East Indiaman, by an outraged nabob, who complained that his own comfort and that of his suite was utterly destroyed by the villainous behaviour of the ship. "Can you do nothing to stop it?" said he. 'Well," replied Captain L——, reflectively, "I

only know of one way to stop a ship rolling at sea, that is to shove a handspike through the lee scupper-holes, and hold her steady!" "Then, why, in the name of fortune, don't you do it?" roared the nabob. "Well, sir, unfortunately all the handspikes are in use, and I haven't one I could spare for the purpose at present."

The nabob retired, fuming and fretting, and laid a formal complaint before the captain, that the mate, although he knew of a plan to prevent the ship rolling, had refused to put it into practice, on the absurd plea that all the handspikes were in use!

The muscular effort involved in swallowing the captain's story did much more than could have been accomplished by fifty handspikes to restore our equanimity, and as, fortunately, towards evening we got into smoother water, the rest of the voyage was uneventful. On Sunday morning we sighted the Norwegian coast, and

about ten arrived at Aalesund, which quaint little seaport we had selected as the starting-point of our tour.

We bid adieu to the *Tasso* with feelings akin to regret, having even in so short a voyage become thoroughly attached to our comfortable bunk and to the home-like ways of the ship, which rendered the voyage more like a yachting cruise than a journey on a mere passenger steamer. From the captain, steward, and all on board, we received the utmost kindness and attention.

One other passenger disembarked with us at Aalesund, a Colonel B——, who was bound to Sylte, on the Nord Fiord, for a month's salmon-fishing. Having passed a polite and cursory examination by the custom-house officers, who seemed more anxious about contraband provisions than anything else, we disembarked, and proceeded through the deserted streets to the Hôtel Scandinavie, where we ordered dinner.

We had ascertained from that wonderful publication, the "Norges Communicationer," a Norwegian time-table compared with which the much-abused Bradshaw is simplicity itself, that a steamer, calling at Aalesund at six p.m., would take us on to Molde, our future headquarters; but the colonel could not be forwarded to his destination till Tuesday morning. The loss of two days' fishing did not at all suit the sportsman's book, so we accompanied him to the house of Messrs. Wilson's agent, Mr. Muller, who exerted himself manfully, as interpreter, to secure the services of two men to row the gallant colonel to Sylte, a distance of some thirty miles. After a lengthy negotiation, the men and boat were forthcoming at a price of thirty krone, only stipulating that the start should be delayed till the cool of the evening, the heat being quite tropical in its intensity.

Whilst waiting for the obliging agent, who was occupied amongst the shipping in the

harbour, we were much amused by the evolutions of a couple of juvenile Norsemen, who were rowing themselves about in a coffin-like machine, composed, apparently, of an old packing-case, to which they had imparted something of a boat-like appearance by the addition of a wedge-shaped prow. With the aid of two pieces of board as sculls, they navigated this frail barque with much aplomb and dexterity, utterly indifferent to their excellent chances of a watery grave. We were told that the Norwegians never learn to swim, loving their sea-girt homes so much that they prefer, when once in the water, to drown quickly, rather than to prolong the agony of leave-taking by unsuccessful struggles! This remarkable fact we elicited, with much other curious and interesting information, from an intelligent native of Aalesund, in correct go-to-meeting costume of black coat and chimney-pot, who, under cover of asking for a light for his pipe, entered

into conversation in remarkably good English and proved to be, like many of his countrymen whom we afterwards met in most out-of-the-way places, an ex-sailor, who had been half over the world.

The linguistic resources of the Hôtel Scandinavie were limited. A boy was retained, as is usual in many of the Norwegian hostelries, with a smattering of English stowed away somewhere in his thick cranium; but, as we heard afterwards remarked by a fellow countryman of his, "he looked like a monkey, and could not speak his own language correctly!" Fortunately, the waiter understood German; so, with a few misunderstandings, we got along capitally. The colonel persisted in trying to get out of the waiter how far it was to Sylte, and how long he was likely to be getting there; but, whenever the word Sylte was mentioned, Carl insisted on rushing out of the room, under the impression that seltzer was wanted, and at

last had to be forcibly held back by the swallow-tails till a reply could be extorted from him.

After dinner we climbed the hill behind the town, called Aalesundsaxel, an almost perpendicular rock, from which a magnificent view of the Nord Fiord and the surrounding mountains gave us a most favourable impression of the treat in store for us. A cup of delicious coffee on our return to the hotel (the coffee in Norway, even in the most out-of-the-way places, is always excellent), and Carl informed us that it was time to start on our respective journeys. The colonel eyed his cockleshell of a boat and ancient but tough-looking crew with some disgust, ejaculating, "Good heavens! so that is to be my home for the next twelve hours:" and, with much commiseration, we bid the adventurous navigator a cordial adieu. We are glad to learn since our return that he arrived safely at his destination in the early morning, having finished a couple of novels by the

way (he *said* he was going to do a fair share of the pulling), in the nick of time to neatly gaff a salmon, which his friend and future host, who thought he must have dropped from the clouds on purpose, was just about landing.

A most luxuriously fitted little steamer awaited us in the bay, and we enjoyed the magnificent voyage down the Molde Fiord thoroughly. And now the mystery of our title unfolds itself. When the mate (who, as a rule on board all the fiord steamers, speaks English well), came to take our fares, Dick asked for two tickets, indicating myself as the sharer of his joys and multiplier of his expenses, to which the mate rejoined, "The lady is your wife, sir, I presume?" Dick owned the soft impeachment, and the man of tickets replied, "Then *one and a half* is all you require, wives go half-price in Norway;" and Dick received a ticket bearing the simple yet touching inscription, "Mand og Frue, Krone

5. 40," being a fare and a half. This was good news, and we tried to make a similar arrangement at supper, but our efforts were not crowned with success.*

However, on nearly all the steamers we scored as one and a half; and when driving, choosing the stolkjærre, a vehicle holding two persons, in preference to two carrioles, which as a means of conveyance are not calculated to promote social intercourse, one being of necessity always some distance behind the other, we paid only one and a half times the price of a carriole. So that, although at first I felt a certain amount of degradation in being estimated at half my real value, and was,

* This curious practice of making a reduction on taking a quantity is pretty general on the fiord steamers, the discount varying from twenty-five to fifty per cent. on each extra presonage. It is applied, however, only in the case of husband and wife, or of parents and children travelling together; from brothers and sisters by themselves, or from parties who are bound by no nearer tie than that of friendship, the full fare being exacted.

moreover, often afterwards alluded to by Dick, in his more flippant moods, as a vulgar fraction, I came at last to regard it as distinct evidence of the Norse woman-worship, of which I had heard so much; Dick putting it cleverly, that as in England man and wife were only one, but in Norway one and a half, the extra half was, no doubt, a recognition of the importance of what we in England fallaciously term the weaker vessel.

However, if we paid as one and a half, we ate and drank as two, and enjoyed ourselves like half a dozen.

We reached Molde at half-past ten, a voyage of four and a half hours; and as going to bed in brilliant sunshine was as yet incomprehensible to us, we sat on the balcony of the hotel, chatting and smoking, till long after midnight, with a sort of feeling that it was four o'clock in the afternoon, in a particularly bright and lively French watering-place.

At last, exhausted nature compelled us to seek the downy, though somewhat abbreviated, couches which awaited us in a snug little room, which, alas! adjoined the *salle-à-manger.*

We were rather dismayed to find a jovial supper-party encamped just outside our door with the evident intention of making a night of it. "If those gentlemen disturb you," said our host, as he ushered us into our sleeping apartment, "by playing on the piano" ("Good Heavens!" ejaculated Dick), "or otherwise, just tap on the wall, and they will leave off." This did not sound very cheering, and our repose was considerably broken by the clinking of glasses and occasional bursts of merriment; but in a country where the sun himself keeps such untimely hours, we felt that it would be ungracious to make a fuss about such a trifle as a night's rest.

* * * *

"Don't you think, my dear Fraction," said

Dick, after I had read over to him the preceding pages, "that your recollections, though certainly amusing enough, are a trifle too personal and wanting in — ah — general interest? Now, what I should like to do would be to give the reader some solid facts about the country and the people (I could easily get them from Bædeker, you know), and, generally, to show him the way about. What to see, and how to see it, you know, and that sort of thing. Now, suppose I write the next chapter, and you'll see what I mean." "So you shall," said I, gazing ruefully at my inky fingers; "and I will supply you with ideas when your wits go wool-gathering, as is too often the case." 'Then, here goes," said Dick, "for"—

CHAPTER II.

MOLDE AND ITS ENVIRONS.

MOLDE is a particularly clean, bright-looking little town of about eighteen hundred inhabitants, charmingly situated on the fiord of the same name, and within easy access of some of the finest scenery in Norway. The air is clear and bracing, and the mountain scenery on the opposite side of the fiord of grand and ever-varying beauty. It boasts of one exceedingly good hotel, the Alexandra, beautifully situated at the end of the town, the landlord of which, Herr Hanevold, is most courteous and obliging, and a very genial, good-looking fellow withal. Another hotel, on quite a palatial scale, is in

course of construction; and Molde bids fair to become quite a fashionable resort of those tourists who love to congregate where fine scenery can be enjoyed without fatigue, and with the advantage of gay and sociable intercourse.

Perhaps, then, the greatest charm of the place, its simplicity and restfulness, will have fled; but the lover of solitude will still have plenty of quiet and beautiful nooks in which he may forget the world, and be by it forgot, to his heart's content, and society will be the gainer by one more pleasure-haunt.

Capital bathing may be had in the fiord, just in front of the Alexandra, the waters of this far northern clime being in summer of the most delightful temperature, and altogether Molde is a place in which a very pleasant sojourn might be made without going much further afield. A little hill called the Rækners-haugen, just behind the hotel, affords magnifi-

cent views of the island-dotted fiord, backed by the sublime peaks of the Romsdal; and those ambitious of a steeper climb may ascend "til Varden," a dilapidated summer-house on the top of a hill thirteen hundred feet high, called the Moldehei, by as rugged a path as can be wished, being recompensed by a still more extensive view.

Molde is famous for its wealth of flowers, which its sheltered situation particularly favours. Roses, honeysuckle, and yellow lilies of a most delicious fragrance bloom in the greatest profusion, some of the gardens, notably that of the English consul, Mr. Dahl, being brought to a high pitch of cultivation. By-the-by, those who, having come direct from England, are unprovided with English money, can obtain it to any amount from Mr. Dahl, at a very slight advance on the usual rate of exchange.

From Molde, as a centre, some of the finest

scenery in Norway may be reached by one or two days' travel, the discomfort and tedium of long and comparatively uninteresting routes across country being avoided. Thus, the Romsdal, which is generally approached by tourists after a four days' drive through the comparatively tame scenery of the Gudbrandsdal, when almost too fatigued to appreciate its grandeur, may be thoroughly explored, as it deserves to be, by taking one of the frequent steamers from Molde to Veblungsnæs, and thence walking or driving up the valley to Stueflaaten and back, thirty miles each way. The Geiranger Fiord, one of the finest, if not the finest fiord in Norway, is reached by crossing the Molde Fiord to Vestnæs, a lovely row of about two hours and a half, and driving thence over a magnificent mountain pass to Söholt, whence twice a week a steamer goes to Hellesylt and up the Geiranger Fiord, returning next morning to Aalesund. The Geiranger should, however, if time

permits, be thoroughly explored in a rowing-boat, which may be done from Hellesylt in eight or nine hours, and at a cost of about ten krone. From Hellesylt, also, a grand mountain excursion may be made to the Jörund Fiord and back in twelve hours (nearly the whole way may be driven), or, if the traveller prefers it, he may cross the Jörund Fiord to Sæbo, and drive thence to Örstenvik, whence a steamer will take him in two or three hours to Aalesund. When the question of steamers comes into play, the "Norges Communicationer" must always be consulted before starting, as the boats run only once or twice a week; and if the traveller has not arranged his excursion so as to meet them, he generally finds that the day of their departure is that immediately preceding his own arrival. From Aalesund to Molde, however, there are steamers almost daily. Should the tourist wish to visit the North Cape (an excursion most highly spoken of, both by Norwegians and

foreigners), steamers go from Molde to Throndhjem, where the North Cape steamer may be met, the journey there and back occupying about eight days. From Throndhjem to Molde the journey may be made overland, *viâ* the Romsdal, in four days. For men with "encumbrances," therefore, either in the way of families or of superabundant luggage, Molde is a capital *pied-a-terre* from which to explore the finest scenery with the least amount of fatigue and discomfort.

"There!" said Dick, triumphantly, when he had got thus far, "what do you think of that, for a compendium of useful and valuable information for those about to visit Norway?"

"Well," replied the Vulgar Fraction, "I call it remarkably dry reading; and you have said nothing about the awfully nice kind ways of the people, the funny little wooden houses they call stations, where we were made so comfortable, the delicious trout and salmon, eggs, and

coffee" ("Gross materialist!" growled Dick), "and given no description of the scenery or anything."

"Well," said Dick, "then, the next chapter you shall write your own way, or, better still we will write it together; and when I find you are getting too poetical and descriptive, I will contribute a hard fact or two, just to give it a substratum of common sense and practical usefulness."

"I see," said the Half, "a sort of joint production, like that of the literary Siamese twins, Messrs. Erckmann-Chatrian."

"H'm!" said Dick, grimly, "I'm afraid there will be more of the *hash* than the *joint* about it; but we shall see."

CHAPTER III.

VEBLUNGSNÆS AND THE ROMSDAL.

WE spent two very pleasant days in Molde, being generally accompanied in our rambles by the consul's dog, a very fine setter, who, having much time on his hands, and being also probably actuated by a sense of the duties devolving on him from his official position, lay in wait for us on the hills behind his master's residence, and shared all our expeditions, being generally returned to his owner in a more or less dilapidated condition. On the Tuesday afternoon we embarked on the local steamer for Veblungsnæs, leaving our baggage in the care of the genial landlord of the Alexandra,

and taking with us only what could be stowed in a knapsack and a dressing-bag.

The latter part of the voyage to Veblungsnæs is of great beauty, the fiord becoming narrower and narrower, and the mountains more and more rugged and inaccessible as we proceed.

We saw one or two wild goats high up amongst the scanty herbage, which here and there clothed the almost perpendicular cliffs, pretty little creatures, not much bigger than rabbits, and evidently possessed of the utmost confidence in the security of their retreat.

Near Veblungsnæs the place was pointed out to us where a body of three hundred Scots, under the leadership of Lieut.-Colonel Ramsay, Captain Hay, and Captain Sinclair, landed in 1612, with the intention of pressing forward to Sweden, with which country the King of Denmark and Norway was then at war. After six days' march into the interior, they were, however, set upon by the "bours of the cuntry,"

by whom they were, with a few exceptions, all "killed and murthered." A monument erected in the Gudbrandsdal still commemorates the scene of this "infortunat accident." We reached Veblungsnæs about eight o'clock, the journey having occupied three and a half hours; and instead of driving to the much-belauded Hôtel Aak, the course generally pursued by visitors to the Romsdal, we followed the advice given us by our late host, and made our way to the less pretentious Hôtel Romsdal, in Veblungsnæs, the memory of which comfortable little hostelry and of its kind owner forms one of the pleasantest recollections of our tour. The Hôtel Aak, by-the-by, will cease to exist as such after the present season, having been purchased by a wealthy Englishman as a summer residence.

On leaving the boat, we were assailed by a host of men and boys, anxious to drive us to the Hôtel Aak, or up the Romsdal, or to the end of the world, if only we would engage them

on the spot. We resisted their blandishments, however, and, shouldering our luggage with the happy independence of knapsack-bearers, strode forward in search of our hotel. One very pleasant-looking fellow volunteered, with apparent neglect of his own more pressing interests as a carriage-proprietor, to show us the way, and, as a reward, received permission to call again with reference to an equipage for the morrow. This he did without much loss of time, walking into our bedroom about two minutes after we had taken possession of it, accompanied by a friendly neighbour to act as interpreter.

This was rather embarrassing; but we soon got accustomed to the simple-minded ways of the natives, and to intrusions of a still more startling and unexpected nature. For instance, if you forget to put your boots outside on retiring for the night, the chambermaid wanders in in the morning, in the most free and easy

manner, and has a hunt for them, returning them in the same unceremonious way duly polished.

Our energetic friend turned out to be the master of the posting station, and an exceedingly pleasant, civil fellow. He was the possessor of a very comfortable stolkjærre, with good springs and harness, which we hired for the journey up the Romsdal and back. It is well to take this precaution when possible, for a stolkjærre without springs, which is often the case with those hired from station to station, is an instrument of torture, as we afterwards experienced to our sorrow, only one degree less painful than the rack. We only paid four krone for the hire of vehicle and harness for three days.

Early in the morning we started, the whole establishment, with jolly Herr Torke, the landlord, at the head, turning out to wish us good speed.

Our bill, which included a capital supper of trout and eggs, beds, and an excellent breakfast, was five krone for the two; and this we found to be the average tariff at all the country stations.

The burly station-master accompanied us himself as "skydsgut," or postboy, the first stage of the journey, and proved, according to his lights, which from a linguistic point of view were limited, a most pleasant and talkative companion. We were fortunate in having a magnificent day to explore this renowned valley, and much be-praised as it is, it fully sustained its reputation.

The Norwegian mountains certainly strike one at first as wanting in height, and, of course, are not to be compared with the giants of Alpine scenery, the highest of the peaks in the Romsdal not exceeding six thousand feet; but what they want in height is fully made up by their wonderful steepness and sharpness of

outline. Five thousand feet of almost perpendicular rock, seamed and scarred by the stupendous forces which have carved out the valleys of this wonderful country till its configuration resembles that of a huge cheese, from which wedge-shaped slices have been hewn in all directions, and diversified by innumerable torrents, which gleam white like streaks of snow from every cranny and crevice, form a tolerably imposing object to the traveller whose path is frequently overhung by the frowning precipice; and a valley hemmed in on all sides by mountains of this description cannot fail to elicit feelings of wonder not unmixed with awe. Nothing can exceed the rugged grandeur of the Romsdalhorn itself, which at Aak dominates the whole valley, and presents the curious appearance of a huge peak super-imposed on a mountain of already towering dimensions. The Troltinderne, or Witches' Peaks, whose fantastically serrated summits resemble the

shattered pillars of some primeval temple, are quite unique in their weird and desolate aspect.

But by far the greatest charm of the scene lay in the rushing Rauma, which filled the otherwise desolate-looking valley with life and beauty, now leaping and foaming around the huge boulders that stemmed its course, and anon racing along in a swift rush of green-hued water, flashing here and there into a myriad dimples as its depths are stirred by some unseen obstacle. Ever and anon a mountain torrent leaps from its parent snows ("Leaps from its parent's nose," murmured Dick, thoughtfully; "rather felicitous expression that for a headlong descent!") to join the mighty flood, flinging its foaming waters from rock to rock in cascades of surpassing beauty, and filling the air with nature's sweetest music. "Shade of Bædeker, how art thou translated!" exclaimed Dick. "And now to business."

At Horgheim, ten miles from our starting

point, we changed horses, exchanging our strong and handsome pony for a dreadfully down-spirited looking little horse, who looked as if he wanted nothing so much as to go to bed for a week, the post of skydsgut being filled by a fair-haired little maid of some ten summers, who was hoisted into her seat behind the stolkjærre by her mamma with much maternal pride.

That broken-spirited pony, who afterwards turned out to be a jolly old humbug, quite spoiled our pleasure for the next two or three miles. We wanted to get out and carry him, and were quite ashamed of ourselves for taking the poor beast out again, feeling sure he must have just returned from a long and toilsome journey. Dick walked by his side in the blazing sun, coatless and vestless, and perspiring at every pore, coaxing and entreating him to vary his funereal pace ever so little; but to no purpose. At last we met a re-

turning carriole, the driver of which, a sturdy boy, promptly changed places with our infantine conductor.

"Hesten er trett," said Dick, reproachfully pointing to the pony's drooping head and dejected mien, and conveying by these few but expressive words his opinion, that such a dog-tired and half-starved beast ought never to have been sent on a journey of seven miles, and that the so doing reflected infinite discredit on the station-master at Horgheim, and, in fact, on everybody concerned.

"Ikke trett, men doven" (not tired, but lazy), replied the boy, laconically, with a grin; and, stretching forth his hand, he plucked a slender switch from a way-side tree, and, stripping it of its leaves, placed it silently, but expressively, in Dick's unwilling hand. Strange to say, from that moment the half-dead horse revived, Dick was enabled to remount his seat, and we trotted gaily on.

We must not, however, be understood to utter a word in disparagement of the Norwegian ponies as a race, which are the most docile, good-tempered, and willing little animals in the world; but, of course, there are exceptions, and our late steed was an out-and-out specimen of the "old soldier."

Though making no great show of pace, and wanting altogether in the high action and fiery impetuosity which distinguishes the trotting pony, beloved of suburban butchers and sporting publicans, these sturdy little animals get over the ground at a very fair rate, requiring no greater stimulus than an occasional chirp, to which they respond most cheerfully. A whip is hardly ever seen, and then, like the switch which proved so useful to us, is merely held over the delinquent *in terrorem*.

At 1.30 p.m. we reached Fladmark, where we proposed to dine. The low wooden house

which represents the posting-station is not very inviting in appearance, having little to distinguish it from the surrounding stables and outhouses; but, like most of these establishments, its interior is an agreeable contrast to the outside. The rooms are large and airy, and exquisitely clean; and at two o'clock, which is the usual dinner-hour in Norway, a most delicious dish of stewed steaks made its appearance, followed by pancakes so thin and filmy that one might almost see to read through them, with wild strawberries and whipped cream as a dessert. This was a fair specimen of the dinners at nearly all the stations, and the traveller who wishes for more or better food must indeed be exacting in his requirements. A Norwegian family was staying in the house, the daughters of which, clad in picturesque costumes consisting of scarlet bodices with wide muslin sleeves and short petticoats of black stuff trimmed

with scarlet braid, were engaged in the, to us, long unfamiliar game of croquet, which seemed ludicrously out of place in this wild valley, under the very shadow of the gloomy Witches' Peaks.

At Fladmark the Romsdal widens into an almost circular basin, surrounded on all sides by mighty crags of four or five thousand feet in height. The centre of this basin is almost filled by huge boulders, which are heaped about in the greatest confusion, as if some Titanic convulsion had split a huge mountain into fragments and spread them broadcast over the valley, the whole aspect of which is one of wild and desolate grandeur.

At three o'clock we remounted our humble chariot, to which a capital fresh pony was speedily attached, and continued our journey to Ormeim, which was to be our halting place for the night. The road to Ormeim is very steep and hilly, though, like all the high

roads, admirably smooth and well kept. The roads in Norway are kept in order by the landed proprietors, a certain portion being allotted to each farm, and marked off by posts or stones, on which are inscribed the number of the parish or "rode," the number of the farm on the register, and the amount of road in "alen" to be repaired by the proprietor. These posts occur at intervals of two or three hundred yards, and their meaning often puzzles the foreigner. Snow-ploughs, consisting of light beams of wood bent in the form of a gothic arch, and kept together by cross pieces nailed from side to side, are also frequently seen lying by the roadside, and might at first sight be mistaken for incipient attempts at boat-building, only beginning at the top instead of at the bottom.

The scenery becomes less rugged as we advance, and at Ormeim the valley presents quite a fertile appearance, the mountains being

clothed by thick woods of pine and birch and the river flowing through meadows whose verdure forms a most pleasing contrast to the barren though imposing gorge through which it has as yet torn on its headlong course.

The situation of the station at Ormeim is exceedingly lovely, and the house very pretty and clean looking. A magnificent waterfall, the Vermefos, which descends from a height of some two thousand feet in a triple cascade, its course being partially hidden by the luxuriant woods, dashes down the mountain-side immediately behind the house, and fills eye and ear with its soothing monotone (Query, is this a bull, or a very fine and comprehensive expression?). It can be reached by a few minutes' walk through the meadows, and will well repay exploring. The volume of water in the lower fall is most imposing.

We had reached Ormeim in rather a heavy shower, and, whilst waiting in the station for

the rain to stop, were horrified to find that our pet stolkjærre, which had been left standing in the road on our arrival, was being "requisitioned" by a German and his helpmate, who had arrived after us, and were going on to the next station.

Dick hurried out to the rescue, and a regular battle of tongues ensued, the German averring with much politeness that he had no idea it was a private vehicle, and had merely demanded to be furnished with a "wagen," the postboy thereupon seizing the first that came to hand.

However, on his swearing by all he held dear to see it duly returned at the end of the stage, Dick gave way, there being a lady in the case, and his not being able to swear in Norse leaving him comparatively helpless. There does not appear, by-the-by, to be any provision in the Norwegian tongue for a really good outburst of temper, and, in fact, we never

saw one during the whole of our stay. The people don't seem capable of it, and if you swear at them in Hindustani, they only smile the harder.

We saw our beloved chariot disappear with serious misgivings, which, however, were happily groundless, as it returned safe and sound the same evening.

The Half, however, being inclined to take a decidedly despondent view of the matter, Dick proposed a walk to the Slettefos, and we set off accordingly, ordering supper at eight. A magnificent walk we had, the rocks which overhung the road being covered with ferns and strange flowering plants, amongst which was a kind of stone-crop, with huge pendent clusters of small flowers of a delicate shell-pink colour, which was quite new to us, and grew profusely in crannies of the bare rock, curiously enough, always just a foot above our reach. At the end of about three miles, we reached

the Slettefos, which is about thirty yards from the high road, and a splendid fall. The whole volume of the Rauma rushes through a narrow gorge, whose almost perpendicular walls are fringed by beautiful silver birches and young pines, growing apparently out of the solid rock, to fall thundering into a rocky basin, the latter being spanned by a bridge of pine trunks from which the view may be enjoyed to its fullest extent.

The roar of the torrent was deafening, and the spray, touched by the slanting rays of the evening sunlight, exhibited prismatic colours of wondrous delicacy. We tore ourselves away with some difficulty from the fascinating bridge, and retraced our steps, well pleased, to Ormeim, where a frugal supper awaited us, consisting principally of snowy table-cloth and doubtful eggs.

However, our spirits were now restored to this normal pitch, and we slept the sleep of

the just, lulled by the dull roar of the triple Vermefos.

We were astir betimes in the morning, and, ensconced once more in our comfortable stolkjærre, dashed gaily down the road we had come. Except that the drive down the Romsdal called into view new beauties which, owing perhaps to the novel experiences of our journey, we had overlooked on the way up, nothing occurred worthy of remark, till about five in the evening we drove up to the door of the Hôtel Romsdal to receive a hearty welcome from Herr Torke, who informed us with much glee that "saame værelse," the same snug little bedroom, awaited us.

Our previous stay in Veblungsnæs had been of so short a duration, that we had no time to note the leading features of the place, to which we must now devote some attention. *Imprimis*, Veblungsnæs is a military centre! Being the proud possessor of apparently the only piece

of level ground in the whole district of Söndmore, it has been selected as head-quarters for the royal troops, when called out for their twelve weeks' annual training. About three hundred blue-eyed, fair-haired warriors, somewhat under-sized and slovenly in their gait and appearance, but hardy-looking, and as merry withal as a lot of schoolboys, were quartered in and around the village, and imparted quite a lively air to the dilapidated-looking conglomeration of turf-covered shanties which forms the main street. They crowded the windows and doorways of the houses in which they were billeted, and sang and laughed and played larks with each other with a flow of animal spirits quite refreshing to witness.

A number of booths, for the sale of caps and braces, cutlery, and nicknacks of all kinds, had been erected here and there by enterprising speculators, to ease these light-hearted fellows of any spare cash with which they might be troubled,

and were generally surrounded by grey-clad legs three or four deep, surmounted by blue tunics and flaxen heads from which an amount of laughter and noise proceeded which would have done credit to any village fair. At eight o'clock a selection of very creditable music, of a rather sentimental and melancholy description, was played in front of the officers' quarters, and we began to feel that we had got back to the haunts of civilization.

Of course, we had a capital supper at our beloved little hostelry, and retired to bed feeling at peace with ourselves and all mankind. But, alas! there is no rose without a thorn, and now one of the few discomforts of travelling in Norway must be dwelt upon.

In order to avoid, as far as possible, any contact with the cold wooden floors of the sleeping apartments, the last thing the traveller takes off before going to bed is his boots, and, strange to say, however late you retire to your

couch, there is always some misguided individual, who clambers to an adjoining room, or, worse still, to one overhead, just after you have turned over on your "sleeping side;" and then you have the interesting occupation of tracing the progress of the new arrival's preparations for bed by the sound of his boots! First, there is a stumbling, as of fifty pairs of regulation bluchers, up the steep wooden staircase, a violent bang of the door, and then—"clump, clump, clump"—now he is taking off his hat and coat —"clump, clump, clump, clump"—now he has gone to the glass to take his collar off and have a look at himself—"clump, clump, clump" —now he has gone back with his waistcoat— "clump, clump, clump"—now he is taking off his braces; and so on, through every stage of the process, till at last you fall asleep, wondering how the dickens he succeeded in divesting himself of his stockings without first removing his boots! On this occasion, our sufferings

were intensified by the late arrival of a party of four exceedingly noisy French "sportmans," accompanied by guns, fishing-rods, and boots innumerable, and the clumping that ensued before the last man got his boots off was something to remember.

Their appearance next morning justified our forebodings that their mission in life was to tread on other people's corns, and this character was fully sustained by them on several subsequent occasions on which they crossed our path.

The next day it poured, and we set ourselves to work to extract what amusement we could from the streets of Veblungsnæs on a wet day. The hotel, fortunately, possessed a porch, and in it we sat and watched the sportive pussy stalking the bedraggled sparrows on the grass-clad roofs of the opposite houses; watched the sturdy soldiers forming line and trooping forth to their watery rendezvous; and, most amusing

of all, watched the dogs of the village, sniffing up alternate friendships and animosities.

One of these, whom we promptly christened the Composite Dog, excited our unlimited wonder and admiration. The importation of dogs into Norway being strictly forbidden, from a national dread of hydrophobia, has apparently resulted in a good deal of inter-breeding amongst the native specimens, with some rather startling results. The Composite Dog was one of these. He possessed the head of a retriever, the body of a Skye terrier, and the curved legs of a turnspit, the whole being overshadowed by the tail of a Newfoundland, three sizes too large for him. Though evidently a dog of a very friendly disposition, he dared not impart more than the merest semblance of a wag to this imposing tail, feeling that if it once got the upper hand of him, there was no telling where it would stop, and he might be wagged into eternity.

Altogether, with the help of a word of encour-

agement now and then from old Herr Törke, accompanied by a beaming smile (which was all he knew of English), and with an occasional sally down to the pier to gaze inquiringly at the weather, we amused ourselves very well on the little "stoop" till dinner-time, when a regular treat awaited us. The Hôtel Romsdal was evidently on its mettle to do honour to the two poor strangers who had thrown themselves so confidingly on its resources, and we had a dinner which would have done credit to the best hotel in Norway. Soup, fish, two joints (Oxenkjöd and Faarekjöd, Anglicé beef and mutton), reposing lovingly on the same dish, and an omelette soufflée, with jellies, and *compôtes* of various kinds of fruit, which filled the soul of the Half with wonder and envy. After such a dinner a child might have played with us, and the afternoon was dreamed away in digestive beatitude until the returning soldiers woke up the little town once more with noise

and bustle. In the evening we made great friends with Herr Torke, who took quite a childish delight in the trinkets worn by the Half, trotting off with them one by one to the kitchen, to exhibit them to the wondering gaze of his household. Rich as they are in old silver, gold is very rare in Norway, and conveys to them the idea, as Herr Torke tersely put it, of "meget money in England." The first question they ask, however, is whether the work is old, having little respect for any but "gammele arbeide."

Whilst Dick was smoking a farewell pipe with Herr Torke, before retiring to roost, we were startled by the sudden blare of a trumpet, the bearer of which was hurrying down the street as fast as legs would carry him, and blowing with all his might. "Krieg, Krieg!" shouted old Torke, in wild excitement, and hurried us to the door to see the irrepressible soldiers, who had just been allowed time to

divest themselves of everything but their boots, tumbling one over the other out of their billets, in response to the night alarm, and tearing down the street, leaping and shouting, and fastening their accoutrements as they ran. In less than five minutes every man was under arms, and in his place in the ranks, ready to go anywhere and do anything.

The next day (Saturday) we were to leave for Molde, but the steamer not starting till half-past two, the morning remained to be got rid of. What could we do? "Go and see the soldiers," said the Half, promptly; and so we did. We went to their exercise ground, expecting to see marching and counter-marching, and to hear the hoarse voice of command, the clank of arms, and the tramp of martial feet. What we found was a number of cosy little picnic parties dotted about on the turf, the officers sitting reading aloud to the men in a monchalant manner from a little book of tactics,

the men lying and squatting around in a semi-circle, occasionally lending an ear to what the officer was saying, but seeming to vote the whole thing a bore, and allowing their attention to be as easily distracted as that of a lot of Sunday scholars in church on a sultry afternoon, with the doors open. The effect was most ludicrous.

At two o'clock we put together our meagre belongings, paid our ridiculously small bill, and bid an affectionate adieu to the Hôtel Romsdal. Herr Torke, hearing that we were going on to Hellesylt, disappeared for a few moments to return with a beaming smile and a card of introduction from himself to Herr Tryggestad, the proprietor of the hotel at Hellesylt, describing us in the most flattering terms, and assuring the latter that we deserved the best of everything his house could furnish. Mrs. Torke then made her appearance from the kitchen, to bid us good-bye and to receive our compliments

(in pantomime) on her first-rate cookery; and, with a cordial hand-shaking all round, we departed to the boat, warmed to the core by the hearty good nature and kindliness of these hospitable people.

We needed all the warmth we could muster, both mental and physical, for a bitterly cold, tempestuous journey awaited us.

CHAPTER IV.

HELLESYLT AND THE GEIRANGER FIORD.

OUR adventures hitherto had been solitary, that is to say, as far as one can be solitary when, *solus cum sola*, solaced by the charm of wedded companionship; but now we began to experience one of the greatest pleasures of Norwegian travel, in the agreeable acquaintanceships formed amongst our fellow-travellers. There must be something infectious in the good nature and universal politeness of the Norwegians, which communicates itself to the strangers within their gates, for in no other country in Europe have we found the travelling Briton so genial and approachable. Perhaps this is partly accounted

for by the thorough-bred character of most of the visitors to Norway, the purse-proud cit and the obnoxious 'Arry being both conspicuous by their absence. Or, perhaps, after all, the omnipotent stomach is at the bottom of it, and the bilious and dyspeptic being weeded out by dismal anticipations of the North Sea passage, a survival of the fittest takes place, which makes it uncommonly pleasant for those who survive.

On the steamer we were fortunate in meeting two most agreeable companions, whom, as they shared many of our subsequent adventures, we must now introduce as Dr. K——, an Englishman of most pleasant and refined manners, so named by us on account of his strong resemblance to a learned professor of our acquaintance; and his comrade, a young Norwegian student, whom we will call Carl Olsen. (Almost all Norwegians are named either Carl Olsen or Ole Carlsen, and we choose the former as savouring less of undue familiarity.)

The young Norwegian was a devoted admirer of everything English, and as the Half was equally in love with everything and everybody belonging to Norway, the acquaintance ripened apace. The doctor was a well-informed man, who had been everywhere and knew everybody, and the consequent wagging of tongues was worthy of a German "Kaffee-clack." We had a most stormy voyage to Molde; the cold was intense, and frequent showers of rain and sleet drove all to the shelter of the cabin, except Dick, who preferred being frozen to suffocation. The susceptibility of the Norwegians themselves to cold is very remarkable. What to an Englishman is merely a brisk, invigorating wind, is quite sufficient to send them shivering below, and bronchial affections appear to be exceedingly prevalent. This may, no doubt, be to a great extent accounted for by the poverty of their diet.

Our new friends were anxious to hear of a

good hotel in Molde, and were rashly assured by us that they would find excellent quarters at the Alexandra. The steamer touched at Vestnæs, where we took on board more passengers for the universal centre of attraction, which we finally reached about six, and disembarked, all shivering as if with ague. The prompt application of a "bosom caresser" from Dick's pocket-flask, however, restored strength to our trembling limbs, and probably warded off more serious consequences.

We marched up to the hotel, ourselves serenely secure of a hearty welcome and a good, albeit noisy bedroom, and our friends hoping for the best. We were right as to the welcome; but, alas! Herr Hanevold accompanied it by a sorrowful shake of the head, and "I am very sorry I have no rooms for you—my man is now out in the town hunting for them; but I have seventy people in the hotel, and telegrams from nineteen more, who are coming by the

next boat." Our spirits drooped once more to zero, and Dick felt mechanically in his pocket for the flask, but was firmly restrained by the eye of authority. However, we had confidence in the efforts of "the man," a most invaluable factotum, without whose ever-ready aid life at over-crowded Molde would have been a long struggle with adversity; and he shortly afterwards returned, flushed with perspiration and success, announcing that he had beds for all, and to spare.

We lost no time in taking possession of our new quarters, which were in what in England would have been a "slum," but in Molde was a fairly clean little back street. The apartment, to which we were proudly escorted by the perspiring factotum, consisted of a tolerably large room with two beds, which, however, served as the only means of approach to an inner room, in which a single bed was being hastily got ready for the reception of another

visitor. This did not at all accord with our insular notions of propriety; and Dick hastened to inform the landlady, through the medium of our invaluable escort, that he was a man of violent temper, who invariably slept with a drawn poker by his side, and that any intrusion by a third party would inevitably result in bloodshed.

Eventually the preparation of the third bed was abandoned, and we were left in undisturbed possession of the two rooms.

Our friends, who had found a resting-place in the house opposite, informed us (*viâ* the window) that they were in a similar predicament, having to pass to their room through the virgin chamber of an unprotected female, which caused them much perturbation of mind. Under the friendly shelter of an umbrella, however, their transit was effected without any very severe shock to the proprieties. We were only too glad to find sleeping quarters of any kind

without having recourse to the floating bathing establishment, which at one time appeared likely to be the only available refuge. Our worthy host had long before given up his own bed, and betaken himself to the summer-house in the garden, in which airy dormitory he contracted a most superior cold in the head.

We returned to the hotel to join the hungry crowd awaiting supper, which the sudden influx of visitors had taxed its resources to the utmost to provide.

The *mauvais quart d'heure* was fast becoming three quarters, when a diversion was created by a jovial-looking Englishman, who suggested that the interval might be profitably employed by a visit to the neighbouring leper hospital!

This ghastly proposal made our friend Dr. K——, whose health was by no means robust, so uncomfortable, that he had to be revived by the prompt application of smelling salts.

Supper came at last, as everything does to

those who know how to wait; and for a space the clatter of knives and forks superseded the babel of tongues which had hitherto prevailed.

After supper there was a stampede for the balcony, which we left to be fought for by the gregarious, and enjoyed a damp stroll along the sodden shore till bedtime.

At eleven, we retired to our peaceful slum —and slumbers; but the beds, though they would have made admirable substitutes for macadam, were not by any means calculated to invite the approach of the drowsy god. However, the unwonted silence, unbroken by the boot-music of the Alexandra, made up for the hardness of our couches, and we slept the sleep of the just till eight o'clock next morning. On getting up we were dismayed to find that the room contained nothing whatever in the way of washing apparatus, and Dick dressed himself grumblingly, with the view of going out in search of a pump, when,

lo! a couple of washhand basins, ready filled, were reposing outside the door, side by side with the boots! With the aid of these, we completed our somewhat imperfect toilet, and returned to the Hôtel Alexandra to breakfast. Owing to the impending departure of several of his visitors by the midday boat, Mr. Hanevold was now able to stow us in a cockloft under the roof, where, at any rate, we were secure of washing utensils and undisturbed repose.

The day was wild and stormy, and we watched the departure of the crowded steamer to Vestnæs without one pang of regret at being left behind. The distance across the fiord being only eight miles, we had determined to take our chance of crossing by a sailing-boat on the Monday, which would allow us ample time to reach Söholt in time for the steamer to Hellesylt, which did not call there till the Tuesday morning; and at the

same time would give the weather a chance of clearing up a bit. We were fortunate, as usual. By Monday morning the storm had blown its pipe out, and the day was as bright and sparkling as could be wished. Our two friends had been induced, by Dick's prognostications of a delightful sail, to cast in their lot with ours, and we ordered a boat to be got ready by half-past ten; our prospective voyage being envied by the whole community.

And now an hour of reckoning was to come; and after breakfast we followed Herr Hanevold sadly into his little sanctum beneath the stairs, where, drawing forth three of his longest bill-forms, he proceeded to fill them up at the rate of three krone a line. At length, marking the increasing pallor of his victims, our host mercifully suggested a drink, and, his offer being thankfully not to say greedily accepted, rang for his Ganymede, to whom he gave lengthy and

precise instructions, which resulted in the production of a bottle of port of undeniable age and quality, fortified by which we were enabled to support the rest of the operation with cheerful submission and left the chamber with such smiling faces, that our friends, who had been having a rather dismal wait of it outside, went to their doom with unshrinking fortitude.

Relating the story of this bottle of port to a friend some time afterwards, and expatiating in glowing terms on its wonderful quality, the Half said it resembled nothing so much as some "eighteen'-eleven" which we had once been privileged to taste from the cellar of a connoisseur. At this her friend burst into a series of chuckles, and appeared to be immensely tickled. The Half was quite unable to divine the cause of his merriment, and, with some surprise, asked for an explanation. "Such an extraordinary price!" he replied, chuckling more than ever,

"I never heard before of port wine at eighteen and elevenpence!"

It was eleven o'clock before our boat arrived—a trim little craft, called in nautical parlance a "praam," probably from its resemblance to those of the Malayan Archipelago, which sat on the water like a duck, and, with a little mutual accommodation in the stowing of legs, provided ample room for the four of us in the stern sheets. She was manned by three hardy-looking Norsemen, whose sea-going qualities were legibly stamped on their resolute weather-beaten faces, and we rowed off to the envy of all beholders. For about a couple of miles we hugged the shore, and then hoisted sail and, with a spanking breeze on the quarter, danced over the blue waters of the fiord with the exhilarating motion which, to the true boat-sailor, is unrivalled by any sensation on earth.

In two hours we reached Vestnæs; and two of our boatmen, shouldering our friends' luggage,

escorted us to the inn, which was about a quarter of a mile from the landing-stage. Our own luggage consisted, as usual, of a knapsack, the beloved portmanteau having again been left behind, with strict injunctions to Herr Hanevold to see it placed on board the *Laurvig*, by which steamer we intended, on the following Friday, to go on from Hellesylt to Bergen. We parted from our boatmen with much good feeling, the addition of a well-earned krone and a half to the stipulated fare being regarded by them as a piece of princely munificence; and, having given instructions for our 'middag,' or two-o'clock dinner, wandered off to inspect the vehicular resources of the establishment. These consisted apparently of half a dozen rickety-looking carrioles, and we looked forward to our drive over the mountains with some apprehension, which was, however, as it proved, happily unfounded.

Dinner was served, or, rather, put on the

table, at the hour specified; but we regret to say that the comfort of the meal was considerably lessened by the insolent behaviour of the flashy-looking young woman who presided over the establishment, and honoured us by attending to our modest wants. This young lady contrived, by slamming the dishes violently on the table and by a variety of other small annoyances, to convey to us the impression that our presence was eminently unwelcome, and that she was stooping considerably from her high estate in condescending to wait upon us at all. This was the more intolerable as it was the only instance of inhospitality or incivility we or our companions had hitherto met with; nor did we have any further cause of complaint in this respect during the whole of our tour.

We heard afterwards that the people of the place were well-to-do farmers, and anxious to get rid of the somewhat irksome duties attached

to keeping a posting-station. This desirable consummation we endeavoured to help forward by recording a short but emphatic protest in the "dagbog," or visitors' book, which was heartily endorsed by our two companions.

Four tolerable carrioles awaited us on the conclusion of our repast, and having "shaken the dust off our feet," in accordance with apostolic instructions, we commenced our first and only experience of carrioling.

For a short journey the sensation of being whirled along, supported by a seat not much bigger than that of a bicycle, with your legs stretched out in front of you in a sort of trough, is not at all unpleasant; but it has its disadvantages, and none but a case-hardened schoolboy could endure three or four days of this style of locomotion, and then regard a wood-bottomed chair with other feelings than those of "stern" abhorrence. With Bennett's carrioles, which appear to be most luxurious

vehicles, this may perhaps be avoided; but the traveller who hires one of these, encumbers himself with a kind of white elephant, which, when shipped on board the inevitable steam-boat, has a knack of eating its head off, and becomes an expensive nuisance.

We were fortunate in having capital ponies, as the road is a steep ascent almost all the way to the next station, Ellingaard, which we reached about half-past five.

The station at Ellingaard is described in the guide-books as "a mere hovel;" and more fitting words could not well be chosen.

The whole aspect of the place is in keeping with the wretched squalor of the inhabitants, whose haggard appearance seemed to indicate the most abject poverty. In Norway, however, appearances of this kind are very deceptive.

Two unkempt and sinister-looking old men prowled about us for some time, and finally proceeded to harness the only available pony

to a wretched-looking stolkjærre, informing us that other horses had been sent for.

Dr. K—— and his friend generously volunteered to take the stolkjærre, leaving us the prospective advantage offered by a couple of doubtful carrioles; and we saw them drive away with a sort of feeling that our innocent little lives were now entirely at the mercy of these half savage looking mountaineers. However, we determined not to die without a struggle; and a younger man of decidedly handsome, though brigand-like and half-starved appearance, turning up, the Half promptly laid siege to him, with the view of enlisting his sympathies in case of any warlike demonstration. He performed prodigies in the way of staring with hand-shaded eyes up and down the mountain-side in search of the long-tarrying ponies; but happily no occasion arose for more chivalrous assistance on his part. At last, after a dreary wait of about an hour, a stolkjærre, drawn

by a spirited little brown pony, with another tethered behind, and driven by an exceedingly comely young woman, dashed up the road from a distant farmhouse, and the ponies were quickly transferred to our carrioles.

The comely young woman mounted behind Dick as his skydsgut, the Half being escorted by the most sinister-looking of the old men, and the handsome brigand was left lamenting and gazing tenderly at the coin pressed by the Half into his not unwilling hand.

Our road now lay across a plateau of the very wildest and bleakest description, bordered by gloomy peaks, at the foot of one of which brooded a sombre tarn, streaked with steely lights and black shadows by the stormy sunset sky. A drive of about half an hour over a pretty hilly road brought us to the verge of the plateau, and we commenced the steep descent to Söholt at a terrific pace, the spirited little ponies tearing along as if they thoroughly

enjoyed it. Planting our feet firmly one on each side of the cross-bar at the end of the shafts, and settling our hats on our brows, we gave ourselves up to the pleasurable excitement of the apparently reckless speed, and owned for once that carrioling was not without its delights. A herd of mountain cattle were browsing by the wayside, two or three of whom took up a threatening attitude, and with lowered heads seemed inclined to bar our progress; but the wild whoop that heralded our swift approach unmanned them completely, and they turned and fled up the precipitous sides of the valley with the speed and agility of wild goats.

At a turn in the road Dick, who was leading, suddenly became aware that the second carriole was no longer tearing along in his wake, and instinctively pulled up to listen for the death-shriek of the haggard mountaineer, well knowing that if it came to a tussle the Half was sure to get the best of it. However, it turned

out that her pony had only stopped to drink, and she and her ruffianly looking escort were happily both unscathed. The valley, which at first had been a mountain gorge of the most romantic aspect, gradually widened and became filled with luxuriant woods; and half way down the pass, the gleaming waters of the fiord, with the beautiful little village of Söholt nestled amid thickly clustering trees, burst upon us in a view of surpassing loveliness.

It was nine o'clock before we reached the inn, where our friends were anxiously awaiting us, having secured a room for us with some difficulty, the place being full of tourists waiting for the morrow's boat. A capital room had, however, been most kindly vacated for us by one of our many friends from the Hôtel Alexandra; and after a light supper of eggs and fish, and a charming walk to the end of the promontory on which Söholt is situated, we retired to our well-earned rest.

The little town of Söholt was quite busy next morning with tourists, each carrying some *article de voyage* to swell the already formidable heap awaiting the arrival of the boat from Aalesund, which was due at ten a.m., and her appearance in the bay was the signal for quite a fleet of shore-boats to put off and surround her, like so many canoes of the South Pacific on the approach of a trader. She was already pretty full of passengers, and our contingent, which included amongst the luggage a couple of "trilles," or four-wheeled phaetons, and a carriole, threatened to crowd her uncomfortably. However, the capacity of a steamer is proverbially elastic, and we were hoisted up the side one after the other, to be shaken down, as soon as she began to move, into such corners as were left.

One of the first sights which greeted us on our arrival at the quay was that of the noisy French sportsmen from Veblungsnæs,

comfortably stowed, with their paraphernalia, in the stern sheets of the only decent boat, from which they surveyed two or three ladies being handed down into the bows amongst the luggage with imperturbable equanimity.

We managed to wedge ourselves into places on the quarter-deck of the steamer, and, looking round, recognized several of our Molde acquaintances, and two of our fellow-passengers on board the *Tasso*, who greeted us like old friends. The rest of the passengers included a lot of evidently north-country people, who had come over by the Newcastle boat; a large sprinkling of spectacled and bearded Germans, with which well-hated race the whole country, and the steamboats especially, appeared this year to be overrun; and a party of nine or ten Americans, in whom, the ladies particularly, some of the national characteristics were developed to a degree that made them rather obnoxious as travelling companions.

Your American gentleman is, as a rule, when travelling, as quiet-mannered and unobtrusive a fellow as you could wish to meet, and many of them thus encountered may be numbered amongst our most pleasant acquaintances. There is, however, something in the loud-toned aggressiveness of the female element which, to those accustomed to the unassuming demeanour of the European lady, who, whilst naturally expecting every courtesy from the chivalry of the opposite sex, is yet utterly free from self-assertion, is positively revolting. No English lady, for instance, would march boldly into the centre of a crowded deck, and, without waiting an instant for the voluntary offer of a seat, which she might yet be certain would follow her appearance, ejaculate in an injured tone, "Is there anywheer here I can sit daown?" When the feelings already wounded by this implied reproach are further trampled on by the infliction on one's æsthetic sensibilities of a green travel-

ling costume, surmounted by a red lawn-tennis hat, tied on with a blue veil, the effect produced is the reverse of pleasant, and produces a hasty retreat to another part of the deck.

The day was magnificent, and the scenery of the Sunelv Fiord, when our view of it was not obscured by the interposition of the heads and shoulders of our fellow-passengers, exceedingly fine. However, as we were to return by the same route, we did not so much regret missing an occasional view; and about one o'clock, feeling premonitory symptoms of hunger, we descended to the cabin to see if there were any signs of a midday meal. There were, indeed! One table was already occupied by a cluster of noisy Germans and the inevitable Frenchmen, who had taken possession thereof early in the morning to await with dogged determination the appearance of the two-o'clock *table d'hôte*, and all the seats at the other had been, we were informed, already

engaged. Our two friends from the *Tasso* were indeed already occupied in the demolition of a private repast, which they had had the forethought to order, and kindly offered us the reversion of their seats when they had finished, which we were glad to accept. Two o'clock came, and we were still waiting patiently for the meal, of which no signs had yet made their appearance except a supply of plates and forks, and Dick, in despair, demanded bread and "eidammerost," with the view of thereby supporting exhausted nature until something more substantial should be forthcoming. This "eidammerost" (the Norwegian synonym for Dutch cheese) was the only edible specimen we had yet met with, the *smell* of the native "gammelost" being all sufficing, and the "myseost" being a nauseous compound of sugar and soap. The only result of his request, however, was to severely shock an antiquated spinster who sat at his right hand

by the apparent profanity of his language, and to provoke a derisive smile from the attendant nymphs.

At length the dishes began to make their appearance in a curiously inverted order. First, strawberries and cream and stewed fruits of various kinds; then, after a long interval, almonds and raisins and a tray of biscuits; then a handsome array of water-bottles and chips of dry bread; — finally, about three o'clock, tureens of savoury stew were handed in one after the other, with the unceremonious request, "Pass around!" Pass around they did, and their contents disappeared with remarkable swiftness. There were "lashings" more to follow, however, and we really enjoyed an excellent meal, towards the end of which the American party, by whom, as they alleged, the seats had been "reserved," made their appearance, under the leadership of the red-capped lady, and "kicked up no end of

bobbery." However, the rule had been, as usual at a *table d'hôte*, "first come first served," and with the good temper born of repletion, we listened whilst they blew off their steam. We heard that on another occasion they had endeavoured, by bribing the steward of a steamer, to monopolize the chief cabin for themselves, the other passengers being calmly excluded on the plea that the cabin was "reserved," until some of less yielding temperament than the rest appealed to the captain to be reinstated in their rights as first-class passengers.

As we neared Hellesylt, it transpired that the greater part of the passengers were going to Merok, at the head of the Geiranger Fiord, intending to pass the night there; but the inn at Merok being very small, it was evident that only a small proportion of their number would be able to find accommodation, and a movement was accordingly set on foot to

induce the captain of the steamer to bring them back the same night to Hellesylt, where the hotel was thought to be sufficiently large to provide beds for all.

This he agreed to do for forty krone, and steps were taken by canvassing the passengers to raise the required sum. Such of them as did not want to go up to Merok and back regarded this arrangement with some dismay, as their own chances of accommodation at Hellesylt were thereby endangered; and as we intended to land at Hellesylt, reserving the excursion up the Geiranger for the following day, our good offices in the way of securing beds were at a premium.

One by one our Molde acquaintances drew Dick aside, and enlisted his services as courier, and he soon had quite a respectable number of orders on hand, and began to entertain serious thoughts of landing Herr Tryggestad for a handsome commission. Horses and car-

rioles for the following morning were also in great demand, and Dick began to swell visibly with a sense of his importance as an ambassador plenipotentiary.

About six in the evening we reached Hellesylt and were the only passengers to disembark, all the rest going on to get a sight of the renowned Geiranger. We marched up to the hotel with becoming dignity, and, presenting our credentials (from dear old Herr Torke), rather astonished the landlord by requisitioning eight rooms. His resources were, however, quite equal to the emergency, a new wing to the hotel having just been completed, which alone could accommodate thirty guests; so that our doubts and fears turned out to be groundless. However, we had an extensive choice of rooms, and had much pleasure in "doing our best for our esteemed clients." Herr Tryggestad, who was evidently much impressed by our late host's recommendation,

thoughtfully suggested that it would be as well to have our supper before the return of the steamer from Merok; and after a cosy little meal, we went out to the balcony to wait for the *dénouement*.

The steamer hove in sight about eight o'clock, and quite an exciting scene ensued. As soon as she brought up, and was boarded by the shore-boats, one of the Americans bounded into a boat, and rowed off at full speed for the shore, hotly pursued by our friend from the *Tasso*, who was equally smart, in another. They reached the shore together, and raced neck and neck up to the hotel, where the Englishman, who knew the place of old, made a feint for the steps leading to the unoccupied wing, up which the Yankee promptly dashed, only to lose himself in its labyrinthine passages; whilst the *Tasso* calmly sailed on to the ordinary entrance, and with much satisfaction took possession of the room we had already secured

for him. Then the rest of the passengers hurried up with alternating hopes and fears, which were quickly allayed as it became evident that there were rooms for all and to spare.

The Yankees were again outwitted in the matter of supper, one of them having been overheard to remark to a friend, "We have ordered supper for our own party at nine o'clock, and the others won't get any till we have finished. Isn't it a joke!" Steps were promptly taken to nullify this thoughtful little arrangement, and a fair start was the result. We heard that, on arriving at Merok, the irrepressible Jonathans, headed by their red-capped leader, had made a raid on the rooms there, declaring that they had been engaged for their party, but that the unscrupulous Frenchmen had stolen a march on them by rapidly taking possession thereof, and proceeding to divest themselves of their clothing with more rapidity than decency.

The Yankees, however, had their revenge on us. Regardless of the long journey that awaited them on the morrow, they sat in the *salon*, which was unfortunately immediately below our dormitory, entertaining themselves till long after midnight with a noisy game of cards, accompanied by bursts of laughter, in which a high-pitched, hysterical cackle—which proceeded from one of the males of the party, but would have done credit to the female side of a madhouse—predominated over all the rest.

"I wish that party in the parlour," groaned Dick, "were like Charles Lamb's,

> 'Crammed as they on earth were crammed,
> All silent, and all ———.'"

Here another burst of unholy merriment, led by the inevitable cackle, drowned the remainder of the quotation and roused the long-suffering Dick to such a pitch of resentment, that he hurled back defiance in a yell of such piercing and uncarthly shrillness, which yet closely re-

sembled the voice of his tormentor, that the party suddenly relapsed into silence, and after conversing for a few moments in awe-struck whispers withdrew, with as much scrooping of chairs as they could conveniently manage, into outer darkness, leaving us to a repose disturbed only by vivid dreams of the Bicêtre.

It was "boot and saddle," or, to speak more correctly, "breeches and seats," with the whole party early next morning, English and Americans alike, and over the hills to Faleide; and a further contingent was brought by the early steamer from Merok, consisting of those who had passed the night there (with the exception of the Frenchmen, who, after their last escapade, disappeared entirely from our horizon), who also, after a hurried breakfast, joined the southward flight of tourists, leaving us to enjoy a quiet day on the Geiranger accompanied by our now almost inseparable companions, Dr. K—— and the young Norwegian.

The new arrivals included the north-country party before mentioned, one of whom was a young gentleman of very lively manners, but of a most dyspeptic appearance, and with a decided tendency to self-examination of a hypochondriacal nature, believing himself to be a victim to the most unheard-of maladies.

He was continually retiring into corners to feel his pulse and look at his tongue, and thus getting lost and mislaid was a source of constant trouble to his party, who were frequently on the point of starting without him.

"Really," exclaimed one of them at last, when the dyspeptic one had been missing for the fifteenth time, "the next time that young man comes abroad he ought to bring his grandmother with him to take care of him!"

"Indeed," naïvely rejoined an old lady of the party, for whose society, combined with that of her buxom daughter, the young man had shown a decided predilection—"indeed, and I think

if he remains much longer with us, he'll be wanting to make a grandmother of me!"

Having witnessed the departure of the last of the travellers, we proceeded to hire a boat for the exploration of the Geiranger Fiord, for which the magnificent day was most propitious, and Dr. K—— and his friend agreeing to join us, we chartered a fair-sized boat with three rowers. The distance was about eight miles—two miles to the entrance to the fiord (it looks no more than a quarter of a mile from Hellesylt), and six miles up the entire length of it to Merok. We started about eleven o'clock, the men pulling a slow, steady stroke which was evidently calculated to stay, and in about half an hour we reached the mouth of the fiord. The entrance is guarded on each side by stupendous crags, at the foot of one of which nestles a little farmhouse, the windows of which are said to be frequently broken in the winter by the concussion caused by avalanches from the

opposite mountain. Not a very pleasant neighbour for persons of a nervous temperament!

The Geiranger is one of the narrowest of the Norwegian fiords, and by some is thought to surpass all others in beauty. The mighty cliffs by which it is surrounded are certainly more diversified and less barren and desolate in appearance than those of the Nærø Fiord, which is its great rival, and the number of its waterfalls is legion. One group of these, called the Knivslafosserne, or Seven Sisters, consists of a number of slender streams, crossing and recrossing each other, till the whole face of the rock is covered with a silver network of foaming water. Others fall from crag to crag in gauzy veils of vapour, or, leaping sheer from the mountain's brow, reach the bottom in almost invisible spray. High up the cliffs, wherever a little patch of green affords sufficient foothold, are perched little "gaards," or farms, apparently as inaccessible as the eyrie of an eagle, but ap-

proachable by almost imperceptible paths, which are frequently merely the bed of a mountain torrent. Seated on a narrow ledge, two thousand feet above the waters of the fiord, with a precipice of another two thousand feet as a background, these little habitations seem utterly isolated, and their inhabitants are said, when obliged to absent themselves from their airy domiciles, to tether their children by ropes, to prevent their straying over the edge of their narrow world and taking a header into the fiord below.

We were told that a girl of fifteen did actually fall in the spring of the present year from a farm near the Knivslafosserne, her already lifeless body being caught in the branches of a tree some thousand feet below.

We had a splendid row up the fiord, coasting its grand walls, now on one side and now on the other, according to its numerous windings, and getting exquisite "bits" of scenery which

would have been utterly lost by simply steaming up and down its centre in an overcrowded boat.

Our party was unfortunately separated by the necessity for trimming the boat, our young Norwegian, as the lightest weight, being banished to a seat in the bows.

On arriving at Merok, we condoled with him on his having occupied such an isolated position, and hoped he had not found it irksome.

"Oh no, indeed!" he replied; "I have enjoyed myself very much indeed in the perusal of this charming little book," producing his bosom companion, a bijou English Dictionary, which for him had a far greater attraction than the most romantic scenery!

We landed at Merok, and ordering our "middag" at the hotel, proceeded to explore a very fine waterfall, which roars and tumbles through a rocky chasm at the very head of the fiord, and thereby occupied an hour very pleasantly.

After a good dinner at the quiet little inn we re-embarked about three o'clock, the boatmen being refreshed by their long rest, and perhaps a little elated by the moderate allowance of eleemosynary beer which their long pull in the blazing sunshine seemed thoroughly to deserve.

Having a fair wind back, the sail was hoisted and we sped smoothly onward for some time with a minimum of exertion; but the men, anxious to make the most of the helping breeze, and reckless of the sudden gusts to which these mountain-girdled bays are always liable, rigged out a spinnaker, composed of the foresail extended over the side by the branch of a pine tree which they had picked up on shore with this intent, the natural result being that at the first turn in the fiord a puff from a side valley carried spinnaker, mainmast, and everything by the board with a terrific crash. We were within an ace of being overturned, and the crew ex-

tricated themselves from the folds of the sail, in which they were almost smothered, looking rather foolish and crestfallen. Once in the water and nothing could have saved us; for the precipitous walls of the fiord afford nothing in the shape of foothold or support, and we could only have swum round and round like rats in a well. After this experience we tabooed any more sailing, and, in spite of the pleading of the men for just as much as a pocket-handkerchief, compelled them to tug the labouring oar for the remainder of the journey.

We reached Hellesylt in a little over three hours, the way back being beguiled by the Half with snatches of song of a more or less plaintive character, which moved the impressionable Norsemen to more sighs than exertion.

The scenery around Hellesylt is magnificent, hardly if at all inferior to that of the famed Geiranger itself, and the approach from the water is peculiarly striking, inasmuch as the

landing-stage is at the very foot of a wide and imposing cataract, into whose very turmoil the boat appears to be directly heading.

Before supper we enjoyed a splendid walk a little way up the valley of the Sunelv, a mountain stream which descends through a narrow chasm of some hundred feet in depth which it has worn for itself in the solid rock, in a succession of cascades alternating with deep pools of wonderful stillness and transparency.

The next morning it rained in torrents, and we saw our friends start on their inevitable journey to Faleide with feelings of the deepest commiseration. They must, in fact, have had a dreadful time for the next two or three days, as we subsequently heard was the case.

We had ordered a stolkjærre ourselves for the excursion over the Nebbedal to the Jörund Fiord, but after waiting an hour or two in the hope of the weather improving, we were obliged to

relinquish the journey. In the afternoon the weather cleared a little, and, as a last resource, Dick proposed to try some fishing, which the landlord, who, poor fellow! was a martyr to rheumatism, and had been confined to his bed by this change in the weather, had kindly placed at our disposal. He was the proprietor of a small lake up in the mountains, about three miles from the hotel, which abounds in trout; and thither, the stolkjærre having once more been brought forth, we drove, Dick being equipped by our obliging host with a fishing-rod and a couple of artificial minnows.

The drive alone was very fine and sufficiently interesting to have repaid us for the wetting we seemed likely to get, but which we fortunately escaped with nothing worse than an occasional thunder-shower. On reaching the lake, which proved to be a little tarn of about an acre in extent, we turned the pony out to graze, and embarked in a rickety boat which contained

almost as much water as the tarn itself, and Dick proceeded to business.

After lashing the water violently in all directions for about half an hour, he at last succeeded in frightening one unlucky trout to such a degree, that in its hurry to escape it flung itself against the barbed minnow which terminated his weapon of offence, and, being incontinently hooked thereby, became the solitary victim of his prowess. The rest of the finny denizens of the lake had, it may be presumed, retired to their lurking places at the first appearance of the unwonted phenomenon, and preferred to contemplate his evolutions from a safe distance. Our boatman gracefully expressed an opinion that the water was too clear and bright for successful spinning, and Dick thankfully availed himself of the loophole thus offered to save his reputation as a fisherman, and to retire on his laurels. On the return journey the poor little trout, which represented

the result of our afternoon's fishing, was proudly held up by our guide to the admiration of the natives, with a happy indifference to our feelings. However, it played a most important part at supper that night, when a sudden influx of visitors had to be regaled with eggs and pancakes, the despised trout, which was the only fish the larder afforded, being brought forth in a lordly dish and placed before the Half, as hers by right of conquest, to the great envy of the whole company.

On our return from the lake we had noticed what was apparently a small steam-launch, anchored close in shore at the foot of a lofty cliff, and were much astonished and not a little dismayed to learn from the new arrivals that it was the steamship *Laurvig*, which on the morrow was to bear us to Bergen.

Her appearance was wonderfully dwarfed by the lofty mountains at the base of which she rode, and she was really, we were informed, a

vessel of considerable size. The accommodation on board for ladies was, however, said to be of a not very inviting description, and we were advised to go on board at once and, if possible, secure a private cabin. We lost no time in following the advice thus good-naturedly tendered, and rowed off at once. The captain, a burly, good-tempered looking man, whose huge fur cap and woolly coat gave him very much the appearance of an amiable bear on its hind legs, received us on the quarter-deck, where he was busily engaged in hauling up whiting as fast as he could heave the line overboard. To him we preferred our modest request, the Half trying hard, but with indifferent success, to look like an interesting invalid to whom the least hardship might be fatal.

"There were no private cabins on board," he informed us regretfully, a fact of which we were already well aware; but, with a compassionate look at the disappointed face of the Half, he

hastened to add, "My cabin is at your service if you like to have it. Come and see!" and, throwing down his fishing-tackle, he escorted us to the most luxurious little den imaginable, which was in curious contrast to his own rough-and-ready appearance. The Half beamed with satisfaction, and Dick somewhat ruefully inquired, "What shall I have to pay you for this accommodation, captain?" "Nothing at all," said the worthy mariner, "if you will honour me by being my guests?" And from that moment we took possession of captain, ship, and crew, and reigned on board supreme.

Before returning to the shore we bethought ourselves of the portmanteau, and asked, just as a matter of form, if it was on board.

Dire was our dismay to receive from the guardian of the hold, who rejoiced in the learned appellation of Erasmus, the uncompromising reply, "Ingen kupfert!" Anglicé, "Nary portmanteau!"

Here was a pretty go. The faithless Hanevold had betrayed his trust, and left us to face the fashionables of Bergen, "Shirtless, ragged, and tanned," to parody the words of the popular song.

"Telegraph to him at once," said the Half, "and mind you pitch it strong." Alas, poor Hanevold!

CHAPTER V.

BERGEN AND THE NÆRODAL.

ON the Friday morning, at seven, we joined the *Laurvig*, on board which we were destined to spend two most stormy days, yet, on the whole, two of the happiest of our tour. Captain M—— received us like old friends, and gallantly escorted the Half to her cabin, which had been further decorated in her honour by the addition of a handsome bouquet of bright-hued flowers. We had very few passengers on board, and most of those left us at Söholt. The day was fine, but bitterly cold, and the journey to Aalesund could scarcely be described as enjoyable.

We arrived there about three in the afternoon;

and then the rain began to come down in earnest, and our spirits to rise in proportion on the Tapleyan principle.

Dick rowed ashore to telegraph to the defaulting Hanevold in as reproachful terms as could be conveyed by fifteen words, including addresses; and on his return we amused ourselves by watching the loading of the steamer with innumerable barrels of herrings, which was carried on by the crew with consummate disregard of the pouring rain, which had no more effect on them than on so many water-spaniels. After this process had gone on for some three or four hours, we again got under way, only to steam to another depôt and take in more herrings, it being about nine o'clock when we finally bid adieu to Aalesund and started on our passage to Bergen, the wind blowing almost a hurricane, and the rain coming down by bucketsful. At ten, the Half retired to her luxurious cabin and slept profoundly,

undisturbed by the excruciating whistles which hailed our frequent stoppages during the night.

Towards morning the rain fortunately ceased, though the wind blew harder than ever; and after breakfast we joined Captain M—— on the upper deck, where he had been on duty, poor man, most of the night, and he made us welcome to the little chart-room which afforded him an occasional shelter, in which we spent the greater part of the day, Dick and the captain swapping lies and tobacco in approved nautical fashion.

For the greater part of the voyage our course was sheltered by the innumerable islands which girdle almost the whole coast of Norway, from Throndhjem to Stavanger; but here and there we got a bit of open sea, which showed up the Half in her true colours as a seasoned yachtswoman, only to increase thereby the gallant captain's respect, between whom and herself a *camaraderie* began to establish itself,

which was, perhaps, rendered all the stronger by the natural affinity of blue-eyed taciturnity for what our ancestors used to call "a lively rattle." At any rate, the captain made a great pet of her, wrapping her up in his own huge deer-skin coat, trimmed with the hide of a shaggy wolf, in which she looked for all the world like a bright-eyed squirrel overshadowed by its own tail, and allowing himself to be ordered about like a good-tempered Newfoundland by a capricious child.

In the course of the morning the captain called Dick aside and confided to him, with remorseful diffidence, that the missing portmanteau had been on board all the time, having been overlooked by the unfaithful Erasmus, adding, with a pathetic look of appeal, "Must you tell your wife that?" Dick was afraid he must, as the news was too important to be withheld, and the captain heaved a tremendous sigh; but the Half's joy at the recovery of the lost

sheep was so great, that his misdemeanour was let off very easily.

As we neared the Sogne Fiord the coast scenery became very fine, the channel being here and there so narrow as to require most careful pilotage. On the way we passed the partially submerged topmasts of a yacht, which had been recently wrecked in the rash attempt to navigate this dangerous coast without a pilot; and the frequent little lighthouses, which resemble one-storied farmhouses built on isolated rocks, bore grim witness to its perilous character.

We reached Bergen about eleven at night, and being quite at a loss what hotel to go to, a wholesome fear of Holdt's having been impressed upon us by numerous evil reports, Captain M—— good naturedly took us under his wing, and, leaving his ship to the care of the mate, went ashore with us about midnight, and escorted us in person to an hotel near the quay; where, after an interview with the landlady,

who with the rest of the household had risen from their beds in hastily improvised costumes to receive us, he assured us we should be very comfortable and, bidding us a hearty good-night, promised to call on the morrow.

If the word "hostess" might for once be taken to be the feminine of "host," a noun of multitude, it would aptly describe the lady who now welcomed us, whose proportions, the exuberance of which was emphasized to a remarkable degree by her airy costume, were truly magnificent, and, apparently, accompanied by the good humour generally associated with massive bulk. We were ushered into a magnificent apartment, evidently the state bedroom, into which a second bed was speedily introduced by the smiling servants, and were left to the enjoyment of the most downy and luxurious couches we had yet met with. Early in the morning, Dick went outside to take our bearings, as we had not the remotest idea where we had

passed the night, and found from the inscription over the door that our new hostelry was the Hôtel Bergen, at the end of the Strandgaden. A hail from the opposite side of the street then attracted his attention, and was found to proceed from one of our Hellesylt acquaintances, Mr. W——, who, with his two friends, had arrived a little before us on the Saturday evening, and was quartered in the hotel facing ours. The greetings on both sides were most cordial, and during our short stay in Bergen we became great friends, discussing our several adventures and experiences with mutual interest and satisfaction.

The Sunday was rather cold and showery, but as we were given to understand that more rain falls in Bergen during the year than in any town in Europe, we were quite prepared for it. Rejoicing in the change of raiment we were now able to indulge in by the recovery of the long-lost portmanteau, we strolled about

the quaint and ill-paved streets of the picturesque old town till dinner-time, greatly admiring the gay and festive manners of the inhabitants, who, in spite of the inclement weather, thronged the streets in lively chattering groups.

We had a splendid *table d'hôte* at half-past two, washed down by a bottle of excellent hock (there being no duty on foreign wines, they are to be obtained at almost all the hotels and stations of first-rate quality, and at most moderate prices), and began to think Bergen quite a pleasant place to live in.

It is certainly most beautifully situated, being surrounded by luxuriantly wooded hills, into the very bosoms of which the blue waters of the fiord penetrate in all directions, and whose steep sides are fringed with terraces of bright and picturesque looking villas.

The republican freedom of Norwegian manners was curiously illustrated during our

stay in Bergen. We had already been much impressed, literally as well as mentally, by the readiness with which the Norwegians of all classes shake hands with you. It is, in fact, their mode—and a very pleasant one—of expressing thanks, being often unaccompanied by any verbal acknowledgment.

The servant to whom on leaving you offer a gratuity will promptly put out her hand for a friendly clasp; and the number of grimy little paws belonging to the skydsguts which we were constrained to shake in the course of our excursion was legion. Nor is the donor of the gift the only one to receive this naïve expression of gratitude; it is extended to the whole company with a gravity which approaches the ludicrous.

Whilst lounging on the steps of our hotel, we were accosted by a woe-begone looking little boy, whose wistful eyes and almost inarticulate murmuring caused Dick's hand, in

defiance of the teachings of the Charity Organization Society, to wander mechanically to his waistcoat pocket, from which a few öre incontinently found their way into the little outstretched palm. This act of impulsive generosity was promptly requited by a grave shake of the hand, accompanied by a raising of the tattered hat worthy of Beau Brummel himself, the Half also coming in for a share of the little fellow's gratitude.

How can one help liking the people of a country in which the very beggars shake hands with you!

In the evening there was music in the public gardens (the Sabbath in Norway is observed with almost continental jolli—ahem! frivolity), a fee of ten öre being charged for admission, and thither the whole town congregated with one accord. It was curious to see the young men and maidens wandering about in separate groups, apparently as incapable of mixing as

oil and water. It seems the morals of the young women are very strictly looked after in Norway, and if one of them is guilty of walking with a male person before she is formally engaged to him, her reputation suffers considerably. It would be interesting in this case to know how the engagements are brought about. It is also the practice for all the married men to wear a ring, which was regarded by the Half as a most wise provision for the protection of unsuspecting maidens from unwarranted advances, though what is to prevent the men from removing the rings when disposed for unlawful flirtation is not so apparent. Perhaps, however, they are welded on at the time of the marriage ceremony.

Of course our new friends had joined the concourse in the gardens, and equally of course, each of us seized the opportunity of exchanging ideas with some one to whom he or she was not permanently yoked.

On our way home, Mr. W—— asked Dick confidentially if we could get a glass of whisky and 'water at our hotel, generously adding that if such were not the case he could supply us, as their landlord, although, like the majority of those in Norway, having no licence for the sale of spirits, "knowed a 'ouse" where any number of bottles might be procured, the comforts of which we were heartily welcome to share. Accordingly, on our return to the hotel, Dick, having put the question to the waiter, and received the expected reply of "No spirits," retired over the way, and was received by Mr. W—— and his friends with open arms and bottles.

An hour or two afterwards he returned to his own hotel, with an innocent expression of countenance and the neck of a bottle peeping from his coat-tail pocket, and we set the laws of Norway at defiance.

The strict regulations as to the sale of spirits

in force in Norway are said to have been necessitated by the maddening effect produced by them on the modern Norseman, in whom, when thus excited, the Berserk rage which animated his piratical ancestors still manifests itself in a startling proneness to quarrel and to indulge in a free use of the handy sheath-knife. At any rate, their disastrous influence is now placed almost entirely beyond his reach, very few hotels having a licence to sell spirits by retail, and the price of a whole bottle, although not more than two or three krone, being to this frugal living race almost prohibitive.

Well would it be for our own drink-sodden country if the sale of the vile decoctions retailed in our publichouses as spirituous liquors were equally discouraged, and their place supplied by wholesome beer, the quality of which it should be the province of the State to supervise. The demon of drunkenness would then

disappear from our midst, almost as entirely as it has done from Norway, which is now, perhaps, the most sober country in Europe.

Oh, England, oh, my country!
Wouldst thou once more be free?
Then "chuck" those wretched liquors—
Potass and "S. and B.,"
The poison of the fiery gin,
The whisky's fusel oil—
And let thy drink in future be
Drawn from thine own loved soil!

Drink mighty ale! and, as of yore,
Thy sons shall stalwart be,
And bear thy flag as fearlessly
As then o'er land and sea.
No longer snivelling at home,
"We've got no work to do;"
They'll seek it as their fathers did,
Wherever skies are blue.

So mote it be!

Our practice may appear to have been slightly inconsistent with these exalted sentiments; but, as the poet hath it—

"Video meliora proboque,
Deteriora sequor."

The following day the weather was splendid, and we ought to have ascended one of the hills surrounding Bergen, from which magnificent views may be obtained, or to have gone for a trip in one of the numerous excursion steamers, or otherwise to have enjoyed the beauties of nature; instead of which we allowed ourselves to be inveigled into one of the fascinating old-silver shops which waylay the art-loving foreigner in the ever-busy Strandgaden, in which we spent the best part of the morning. Some of the massive silver tankards (wedding-gifts in most cases, and bearing the name of the persons joined together in holy matrimony), which frequently bore date as far back as the reign of Elizabeth, the silver-gilt wedding crowns of most uncomfortable appearance and weight, and other Norwegian antiquities, were exceedingly interesting and ugly, whilst the modern filagree work was both good and expensive. We escaped with a few comparatively harmless purchases,

only to find ourselves once more inmeshed by Brandt's magnificent collection of furs, amidst which we floundered hopelessly till extricated by our staunch friend W——, who came to look us up with the view of transferring himself and party to our hotel, if there should be room, as their own unlimited supply of whisky hardly compensated them for the damp beds to which they had been relegated.

Our hotel was fortunately as capacious in proportion as its proprietress, and they were made heartily welcome to its more temperate though not quite teetotal clime.

In the evening, Mr. W——, who had surreptitiously introduced a bottle of whisky into the sacred precincts, invited us to a secret symposium in his bedroom, of the kind beloved by schoolboys—each invited guest being requested to bring his own toilet tumbler, so as not to offend the susceptibilities of the waiters of the establishment.

We made merry over the forbidden luxury, in combination with a quiet rubber of whist, till eleven o'clock, when our hearts warned us that it was time to go on board the *Laurvig*, which was to sail at midnight, and whose kind-hearted captain we could not allow to depart without a farewell. We boarded her a little before his own arrival, and somewhat astonished the worthy mariner by welcoming him heartily to his own quarter-deck. He half thought we were going back with him to Hellesylt, which we should have liked to do, but was soon undeceived; and learning that we had only come on board for the pleasure of shaking hands with him once more, insisted on our going to his cabin to drink success to his voyage, which we were compelled to do in a bumper of uncommonly good port, he himself preferring seltzer-water.

After a cordial farewell to the gallant captain, we returned to our hotel to find ourselves locked

out, and to dance attendance on the steps, to the evident enjoyment of the rival house, till our repeated applications to the bell awoke the sleepy porter.

Almost the first persons we saw on Tuesday morning were our friends Dr. K—— and the young Norwegian, who had arrived at Holdt's the preceding evening. They had had an awfully rough time of it coming overland from Hellesylt, as we anticipated, having at one stage of their journey to be ferried across a lake in a violent storm, the passage occupying four hours instead of about one, and the boat being in danger of swamping at any moment.

We spent an hour or two in visiting the picture gallery, which did not give us a very favourable impression of Norwegian art, the landscapes being, as a rule, of a very primary-hued and tea-boardy description. The whole collection did not contain more than three or four pictures opposite which one would care to spend a life-time.

In the afternoon we were to leave Bergen for Christiania, *vid* the Fillefjeld; and as this route involved some four or five days' driving, we were once more compelled to separate ourselves from our bulky portmanteau, which we consigned to the care of the steamboat company to be forwarded to Christiania, where we found it on our arrival, waiting at the Victoria Hotel with some scores of others to be claimed by their errant proprietors.

The knapsack being by this time quite worn out by the scrubbing it had undergone, whilst gaily swinging beneath our swift-wheeled chariots, we invested five krone in the purchase of a "tine," or little wooden trunk of native manufacture, which proved an invaluable acquisition, carrying all we needed for a week's excursion, and being both compact and solid; the latter, as the skydsgut generally sits upon your luggage, and is sometimes no light weight, being a most desirable quality.

Our plan was to leave Bergen by the afternoon train for Vossevangen, where we were to sleep, and the following day to drive to Gudvangen in time to catch the steamer to Lærdalsören at seven p.m. We thought it advisable to take a little whisky with us for use on the journey, as we should certainly not be able to procure any on the road, and in case of our getting a wetting, or being chilled by our long drive, it might prove most beneficial.

Accordingly, accompanied by Mr. W—— and his friends, we set out in search of the shop "round the corner," from which their supplies had been obtained, the clue to which was that it was, as is usually the case, next door to a chapel. However, although feeling certain that we were very "warm," as children say when playing at hide-and-seek, we could not succeed in identifying the place, and at last condescended to make inquiries of a passing sailor, to whom we confided our wants. With the ready good

nature of his countrymen, he immediately faced about, and, after leading us a chase of about half a mile, indicated an upper chamber over a gateway in which the forbidden fluid was obtainable. We entered what appeared to be a sort of *café* for the use of seafaring men, and preferring our request for a bottle of the "crathur," were informed that we could be supplied with a glass over the counter, a most unheard-of proceeding in Norway, but that for a whole bottle we must go to the "Stores." We had therefore to retrace our steps, and at last discovered the emporium we were in search of, which was close to the point from which we started.

This little whisky-hunt had taken up so much of our time, that we found we had only about a quarter of an hour in which to pay our bill and hurry to the station. We arrived there just in time for the train, which left at four p.m., and, after a warm leave-taking from the small group of friends who had come to see us off, we

steamed out of the little station, feeling quite lonely and deserted. We heard on our return that the friends who had so kindly given us this little ovation were, on leaving the station, mulcted in a considerable fee for the privilege of going on the platform, which turned whatever sorrow they might have felt at parting with us into indignation at the unlooked-for swindle.

The railway journey from Bergen to Vossevangen is one of the most picturesque little tours that can be imagined. The whole distance is only about sixty-five miles and occupies four hours and a half in the transit; yet such is the ever-varying charm of the moving panorama of lake and mountain presented to the eye of the traveller, that all sense of tedium is lost in the enjoyment of the scene.

The line winds along the margin of a series of lakes, passing at frequent intervals through short tunnels bored in the solid rock, on emerging from each of which the eye is greeted by an

entirely different prospect, the placid waters reflecting every wooded crag or towering pinnacle with startling fidelity. The carriages are most luxurious, and open from end to end on the American system, the guard perambulating the whole train at frequent intervals, so as to keep the passengers awake and prevent their missing any of the beauties of the scenery.

The stoppages are frequent, and are generally taken advantage of to the fullest extent, engine-driver, stoker, and guard, with the whole contingent of travellers, wandering off in a nonchalant manner to gaze dreamily at the plashing waterfalls which enliven the route, till a yawn from the driver, and a leisurely move in the direction of the hissing engine, warn them to resume their seats.

Nearing Vossevangen the line follows for a mile or two the course of a splendid salmon-river, the Vosselv, which forms a series of alternate seething rapids and dark green pools. At

half-past eight we reached Vossevangen, and proceeded to Fleischer's bright and busy-looking little hotel, where we found most excellent quarters.

On our way from the station we were accosted by a pleasant-faced youth of about nineteen, who informed us, in excellent English, that he was the possessor of a good horse and stolkjærre, and proffered his services to take us to Gudvangen on the morrow, for which he asked twelve krone and a half. After supper we inspected his turn-out, and, finding it most comfortable, completed the bargain, being thus relieved from all care as to the means of transport on what promised to be a very crowded road.

Fleischer's Hotel is most excellently managed, and the gentle-mannered waiting-maids all wearing the picturesque costume of the Hardanger district imparted quite a gay aspect to the busy "spisesaal."

We commenced our drive the next morning

under the most favourable auspices, the weather being most brilliant, and our young guide exceedingly intelligent and communicative. During the first part of the journey the scenery was comparatively tame and uninteresting, the peaks which flank the entrance to the Nærodal looming far in the distance.

About one o'clock we reached Opheim, where we halted for dinner and to rest the handsome little pony, who had brought us along at a capital pace. The court-yard of the station was quite busy with carrioles and stolkjærres, whose occupants were waiting for a change of horses; but none besides ourselves patronized the culinary resources of the establishment, preferring to reserve themselves for a good feed on arriving at Gudvangen, wherein they reckoned grievously without their host, as their anticipated "good feed" resolved itself into a limited supply of eggs and bread-and-butter, which formed the only available provisions.

We were joined at dinner by a small party of Norwegians, who, as is their frequent practice, were spending a summer holiday in the beautiful neighbourhood of Vossevangen, and whose courteous and agreeable manners were in pleasant contrast to the ordinary solemnity of a *table d'hôte*. Dick had quite a gossip with one lively old gentleman, whose conversation, consisting entirely of the interjection "jasaa!" with the numerous inflections of which it is capable, was easily intelligible by the unlettered foreigner, and began to feel himself quite at home in the language.

About three o'clock we again got under way, and after a drive of about an hour, reached the wondrous Stalheimskleven, where the road, after a steep ascent of some thirteen hundred feet, appears to come to a sudden termination, being really continued down the face of an almost perpendicular cliff in a series of zigzags of appalling steepness.

The view of the Nærodal from this point is sublime. In the centre of the valley, whose precipitous sides seem within a few hundred feet of each other, rises the dome-like Jordalsknut, a barren mountain of four thousand feet in height, whose isolated position gives it the appearance of a stupendous monument, the road to Gudvangen lying like a white thread at its base. Few travellers have the nerve to drive down the face of the precipitous cliff; indeed, the sharp angles of the winding road render the attempt exceedingly dangerous, and the steep ascent must, of necessity, be performed on foot. At the head of the valley two magnificent waterfalls, the Stalheimsfos and the Sivlefos, gush down the mountain-side in thunderous rivalry, the latter being so near the road as to bedew the traveller with its spray and being approachable within a few yards by a perfectly safe and grass-grown footpath.

At the foot of the cliff we resumed our seats in the stolkjærre, and bowled along the now level road to Gudvangen, which we reached about six p.m. The steamer, a tiny little vessel, not much bigger than a good-sized launch, was waiting at the wooden pier; and, having rescued a few hard-boiled eggs from the hungry crowd at the hotel, we hastened on board to secure, if possible, a comfortable seat. The boat was already filling rapidly, and the seats we appropriated aft were quickly surrounded by a cluster of garrulous Teutons, who rendered the air so thick with their guttural "Achs!" and "Ja's!" that we were obliged at last to seek a less stifling atmosphere and a pleasanter prospect on the fore-deck.

Gudvangen is a poor-looking little cluster of houses at the head of the Næro Fiord, by whose stupendous walls it is completely hemmed in, giving one the almost suffocating sensation of being at the bottom of a well.

CHAPTER VI.

OVER THE FILLEFJELD.

OUR appreciation of the sombre scenery of the Nærø Fiord was somewhat interfered with by the crowded state of the steamer, the passengers swarming like bees on every coign of vantage, and also by the unusually rapid advance of nightfall, to which the lofty walls of the justly named "Narrow Fiord" no doubt contributed in no small degree. It was eleven o'clock before we reached Lærdalsören, where several carrioles and quite a crowd of hangers-on were waiting the arrival of the steamer.

Under the impression that the hotel was close

to the landing-stage, we allowed our "tine" to be shouldered by a stalwart peasant, who swung himself on board from the quay, and, producing a coil of rope from beneath his jacket, offered his services as porter. With the "tine" slung at his back, he strode ahead at a rapid pace, we following in the darkness as best we might, and having several narrow escapes from being immolated by the carrioles which dashed by us at full speed in the race to secure rooms. Having taken the precaution of telegraphing from Vossevangen, we were spared any anxiety on that score; and after an exciting walk of about half a mile, our guide deposited his burden on the threshold of Lindströms Hotel, where the utterance of the magic word "telegram" procured us immediate attention.

Tired out by our long day's work, we retired at once to our apartment, the only approach to which was by French windows opening directly to a verandah, on which we placed our boots,

with the simple trustfulness begotten by contact with a perfectly honest population.

Fancy going to bed in London and putting your boots outside the street door!

In the morning we were informed by the proprietor that there were two return carriages bound to Odnaes, which might be hired by us at a considerably reduced fare, and also a "gig" of Bennett's, which he seemed anxious for us to take; but we preferred the independence of hiring from station to station, and so bespoke a humble stolkjærre for nine o'clock. This was a mode of conveyance much affected by the Half, who liked driving, and, when snugly ensconced in her spring-cart, looked for all the world like a plump Devonshire farmeress jogging to market; while Dick sat by her side, contentedly puffing at his inseparable pipe, and taking in the scenery with little bird-like turns of his head from side to side, which provoked frequent bursts of merriment from his irreverent spouse.

Lærdalsören is not a place in which the traveller would care to stay longer than is absolutely necessary, being situated on a marsh, with no scenery to speak of, and the air being close and enervating. It owes its importance, in fact, to its being the centre from which several routes diverge to Christiania. The most beautiful of these, that through the charming Valders, we were now about to take. A diligence to Odnaes left Lærdalsören at eight o'clock; but this we carefully avoided, as also the stations at which it was timed to stop.

At breakfast we met a middle-aged Norwegian, whose suit of broad-cloth and immaculate linen betokened extreme respectability. He informed us that he was "doing" Norway on his tricycle, and, to judge from his appearance, he must have found it remarkably easy work. At any rate, it has the advantage of being most inexpensive, and the roads are in such admirable condition that, in spite of their occasional

steepness, they present little difficulty to the practised machinist. We saw him afterwards at Christiania, where he arrived shortly after ourselves, apparently very little the worse for wear.

A fairly comfortable stolkjærre, to which a sleek but rather sleepy-looking steed was harnessed, was waiting for us at the door of the hotel, accompanied by a crafty-looking old man, who was evidently the proprietor of the concern, and who forthwith attached himself to us in the capacity of faithful retainer, and eventually, like the immortal Caleb Balderstone, declined to be got rid of; intimating by "nods and becks and wreathed smiles," eked out by shockingly imperfect Norse (at least, we had considerable difficulty in understanding it), that if we did not know when we had got a good servant, he (and the horse) knew perfectly well when they had got good and gentle employers, and meant to stick by us as long as ever they could hold out.

We were glad to get away from the depressing atmosphere of Lærdalsören, and jogged steadily on for a mile or two over the level plain, the mountains gradually closing in upon us as we advanced, till at length we found ourselves driving along a narrow valley of most romantic aspect, which for rugged grandeur would bear comparison with the famous Romsdal itself. Our road lay, of course, by the side of a foaming river, the salmon-haunted Lærdal, which we had to trace almost to its source.

After a drive of about an hour and a half, we reached the first station, Blaaflaten; but here Caleb would not hear of our dismissing him, and we drove steadily on to Husum, which we reached about one. Nearing Husum, the wily Caleb suggested that we should dine there, intimating that after a rest he and his steed would be quite ready to take us on to Maristuen, which was to be our halting-place for the

night, or even to accompany us all the way to Odnaes.

Although the man was exceedingly civil and attentive, the horse was decidedly slow, and the latter suggestion was too awful to contemplate.

However, we agreed to take him on to Maristuen, preferring to put up with a slow horse rather than to run the risk of getting none at all, there being many travellers in front of us. Both man and horse seemed to brighten up when this arrangement was completed, and we drove merrily up to the little station at Husum, where we enjoyed a capital dinner.

Here, again, it was our good fortune to meet a party of Norwegian travellers, consisting of an extremely courteous old gentleman, with his wife and two daughters, one of whom, a girl of about fifteen, had a delicate, Greuze-like face of rare beauty, which threw the impressionable Dick into a fit of rapt contemplation, from

which he had to be aroused again and again by surreptitious kicks from the conjugal boots.

We had a very pleasant chat with the old gentleman, who spoke excellent English; and we resumed our journey, feeling refreshed, mentally as well as bodily.

Half an hour after leaving Husum, we came to the exceedingly quaint and interesting old church of Borgund, which we halted to inspect.

This is a most curious and unique specimen of wooden architecture of great antiquity, the outside of which bears a striking resemblance to a Chinese pagoda, consisting apparently of a series of Mansard-roofs, arranged one above the other, and gradually diminishing in size, the whole being covered with pointed shingles of a rich brown hue, which overlap each other so as to produce the effect of lancet-shaped tiles.

From the salient angles of the two uppermost roofs project fantastic wooden horns, which add greatly to the outlandish appearance of the

structure, the doors and lintels of which are elaborately and grotesquely carved. A gallery or verandah is carried round the four sides of the church, from which a view of the interior may be obtained by means of a sliding panel, the gallery appearing to have been designed for the use of lepers, who at one time were very numerous in this country.

The church is utterly destitute of windows, with the exception of the panel above mentioned, and the interior is in a very dilapidated condition, the building having been unused for a great number of years. A quaint wooden belfry, a little distance from the church, still contains the bells, apparently in good working order.

Resuming our journey, we reached Haeg about five in the afternoon, where we halted for a glass of milk, and to refresh the pony before commencing the steep ascent of the Fillefjeld. A fine waterfall close to the station

is well worth stopping to look at, though only one of the many splendid falls which enliven the course of the tumbling Lærdal.

From Haeg it is a steep climb all the way to Maristuen, which we reached about eight o'clock, the scenery all along being of the most impressive description.

Maristuen is most beautifully situated just below the summit of the Fillefjeld, the view down the valley we had just traversed being exceedingly fine, and the mountain air, after our long experience of deep valleys and walled-in fiords, most exhilarating. After supper, we enjoyed a delightful moonlight ramble along the pine-clad slopes of the mountain, the luxurious vegetation of which was very striking, especially the masses of purple monkshood, which grew everywhere to the height of over six feet, with leaves and flowers in proportion.

The inexorable Caleb waylaid us on our return, and announced his intention of going

on with us to Nystuen the next morning, as, according to his account, the horses at this station were poor little things, and not at all up to our weight and dignity; and once more we weakly purchased peace by submission.

The road from Maristuen to Nystuen is over the plateau of the Fillefjeld, and perfectly level; but this made little difference to our sober-sided steed, who jogged placidly on at a uniform pace of about four miles an hour with infinite contentment.

About half-way to Nystuen, we were overtaken by one of the empty carriages returning to Odnaes, a light and handsome phaeton, drawn by a pair of showy-looking horses considerably above the ordinary size of the Norwegian cattle, which seemed full of life and mettle, and presented a tantalizing contrast to our own primitive equipage. The way of escape from the worthy but humdrum Caleb thus providentially opened to us was not to be neglected,

and on arriving at Nystuen, Dick promptly entered into negotiations with the driver of the phaeton, which resulted in his agreeing to take us the remainder of the way to Odnaes, a distance of over a hundred miles, for the remarkably reasonable sum of forty-five krone, or about fifty shillings.

We felt rather mean at thus surrendering our vaunted independence, but the spectacle of the comfortable carriage driving sadly onward without an occupant was too much for our philosophy.

After a light lunch of bread and cheese at Nystuen, we commenced the ascent of the Stugenos, a climb on which Dick had set his mind, being incited thereto partly by the glowing description given by Bennett of the view to be obtained from its summit, and partly by his love of "going up" whenever he gets a chance.

About half a mile from the high-road, we

struck a rugged and ill-defined path, a little to the eastward of a stream which falls through a gap in the mountain-side; and, after a steep climb of about one thousand feet, reached a rocky basin or depression in the top of the mountain, covered by loose boulders and *débris* over which a fatiguing scramble of about half an hour brought us to the summit, from which a really magnificent view repaid us for our sultry climb. The day was exquisitely clear, and the snow-covered peaks and glaciers of the Jotunfjeld stretched far away into the distance, forming a panorama of extraordinary wildness and grandeur. Beneath our feet the lakes and woods of the beautiful Valders formed a pleasing contrast to the icy desolation of this bleak and wintry region, enabling us to admire at once the most varied and characteristic features of Norwegian scenery.

A capital dinner of stewed reindeer steaks awaited us on our return, at which we were

joined by an English lady and gentleman, brother and sister, who had just arrived at the station on their way to Lærdalsören. They had made sundry purchases of fox-skins and other trophies of the chase at the various stations through which they had passed, including the head of a reindeer, surmounted by an enormous pair of antlers, the stowing of which on their stolkjærre caused them considerable embarrassment. Dick thoughtfully suggested that they should fasten them to the head of the pony, which would both leave the stolkjærre unencumbered and, at the same time, produce a very novel and pleasing effect, and hastened to recommend the faithful Caleb and his steed to their notice as fitting subjects for the experiment. They agreed to hire him on their return from the Stugenos, which they also were going to ascend, and we congratulated ourselves on having at last succeeded in "putting off the old man with his deeds."

After dinner we took our seats in our gorgeous carriage and pair, and bowled along to Grindaheim in splendid style. The road was downhill all the way to Skogstad, some of the descents being so steep as to require most careful driving, combined with frequent application of the break. From Skogstad to Grindaheim, our way lay along the shores of the Vangsmjösen, which is one of the most beautiful lakes in Norway, and surrounded by superb mountains, those on the northern side of the lake being steep and barren, whilst those on the opposite shore are clothed with luxuriant woods. Nearing Grindaheim, the country began to present a most fertile appearance, the verdant roadside being decked here and there by bushes of Alpine roses of exquisite colour and most delicate fragrance.

At eight o'clock we reached Grindaheim, a neat little station commanding a beautiful view of the Vangsmjösen, where we found most

comfortable quarters and a very pleasant-mannered hostess. Here we met two gentlemen who had come from Lærdalsören in Bennett's gig, which they described as a very comfortable conveyance, but one that was regarded with some disfavour by the station-masters as being too heavy for the ordinary ponies.

After a pleasant chat in the porch of the station, we retired to our rest, well pleased with the day's performance.

Our charioteer, a Swede of exceedingly courteous and attentive demeanour, who looked all over like an ex-soldier, was on the look-out for us immediately after breakfast, and at ten we were once more on the road, with a drive of thirty-six miles before us. At one o'clock we reached Löken, where we stopped to dine. This is a most beautiful station, with all the comforts and appliances of a first-rate hotel, and was evidently full of visitors. We

had an excellent dinner, and after a couple of hours' rest, again got under way, and drove through a magnificently wooded valley to Fagernaes, which we reached about seven. Here we put up for the night, beds having been bespoken for us by our friends in the gig, who had got the start of us in the morning, and kindly volunteered to do us this good office. The station is beautifully situated at the head of a lake, of which it commands a delightful view, but is not otherwise particularly attractive.

The next day was Sunday, but the limited time at our disposal did not permit us to observe it as a day of rest, and early in the morning we were once more *en route*, having a long day before us. The road was pretty level all the way to Frydenlund, the next and a most excellent station, where we halted for half an hour to breathe the horses, and then commenced the steep ascent over the Tonsa-

åsen, two thousand three hundred feet, the greater part of which we walked. A magnificent view is obtained from the summit.

After a drive of about a mile over a level plateau, we began an equally steep descent by a splendidly engineered road to Sveen, passing Gravdalen, the former station, which is now an extensive and fashionable sanatorium, on the way.

The country around here, and, in fact, through the greater part of the Valders district, is one mass of pine woods, which stretch away in all directions as far as the eye can reach.

We obtained a first-rate dinner at Sveen, washed down by a bottle of good Sauterne, and, after a cup of coffee in the verandah, began the last stage of our long and pleasant drive.

On the way we met frequent groups of peasants, clothed in their Sunday best, whose graceful and smiling salutations were most pleasant to receive, the very urchins taking off

their hats with an air worthy of a courtier. We reached Odnaes about seven, and, driving first to the hotel there, were promptly repulsed by a somewhat unceremonious cry of "Ingen rum" (no room). Our driver thereupon wheeled about with right good-will, and took us about half a mile further to the Station Framnæs, where we received a most hearty and hospitable welcome, and speedily made ourselves at home.

We parted from our gallant coachman with mutual regret and many hand-shakings, his invariable politeness and many little acts of kindness having won our cordial regard.

As for the horses, they seemed as fresh as ever, and were evidently quite capable of doing their daily thirty-five miles for any number of consecutive days. Their powers of endurance appeared, in fact, to be in proportion to their appetites, which never failed them, and which they were allowed to indulge apparently without restriction.

CHAPTER VII.

HÖNEFOS AND CHRISTIANIA.

THE steamer down the Randsfiord left Fagernaes at 7.30 the next morning, and after a hasty cup of coffee, we drove to the pier, hoping to get a supplementary breakfast on board. This we succeeded in doing, and, after a rather cold and tedious journey of five hours, reached Berger at the southern extremity of the lake, where we disembarked, intending to drive to Hönefos, and thence to Christiania, which would have been a pleasant termination to our tour. Owing, however, to the ill-health of the Half, who had managed to catch a

severe chill culminating in a violent attack of neuralgia, our plans had to be considerably modified.

The rest of the passengers on arriving at Berger proceeded at once to the railway station, *en route* for Christiania, leaving us and the "tine" in solitary and undisturbed possession of the landing-stage, on which we seemed likely to remain, there being some difficulty in finding any one to take our baggage to the hotel. At last we captured a passing peasant, who shouldered the "tine," and preceded us to the bare-looking hotel, which seemed utterly unused to the reception of visitors. The landlord was very civil, but the accommodation and food of the poorest kind; however, the Half was glad of a rest, and we spent an hour or two on the deserted verandah, which commands a very pleasing view of the Randsfiord, enjoying the calm and quiet of the place.

We ordered a stolkjærre at four in the after-

noon, to take us to Hönefos, and thereby committed ourselves to the most dreadful experience of our whole tour.

It appears there are two roads from Berger to Hönefos, one of which, a short cut through a wood, is of the most shocking description, and this our guide, a grinning young idiot of a boy, naturally insisted on taking. The stolkjærre was utterly destitute of springs, and the jolting we experienced over that wretched road may be better imagined than described. In vain Dick exhausted all his Norse, and the worst part of his English, in endeavouring to impress on the wretched boy that he was taking us by the most villainous road possible, and that we infinitely preferred a smooth road, though it led to destruction, than being shaken to pieces on the shortest cut in the world. He only shook his head, with an utter blankness of expression on his stolid countenance which was most exasperating. The result was that Dick walked the greater

part of the way, and the Half arrived at Hönefos so utterly exhausted, that she immediately coiled herself up on a sofa and went to sleep.

One piece of good fortune alone resulted from this miserable drive. Arrived at Hönefos, the boy named some unintelligible hotel, and being told to go to the devil if he liked, promptly drove there, and landed us at the Jernbane, or Railway Hotel, instead of at Gladved's, to which we had intended to go. The Jernbane was of a most dilapidated and unprepossessing exterior, but nothing could exceed the kindness and hospitality shown us by the people there, and we eventually thanked our stars for conducting us to such a quiet haven in which to recruit our shattered frames.

Hönefos is a thriving little town of about twelve hundred inhabitants, which owes its prosperity to the magnificent waterfall which roars and tumbles through the very centre of the town, and which, in addition to attracting

crowds of visitors from Christiania, is utilized in the most matter-of-fact way by the inhabitants, being literally blocked up with saw-mills and factories, and even made to supply a shower-bath of tremendous force and volume. As seen from the long bridge which spans its course, over which the whole traffic of the place is conducted, the appearance of the fall is exceedingly fine, the width of the river from bank to bank being about one hundred and fifty yards, and the whole volume of water, broken up by the huge rocks which obstruct its course into a series of cascades, falling from a height of ninety or a hundred feet into a rocky basin, from which, after a brief turmoil, it resumes its onward course as a broad and tranquil stream. It is very curious to stand on this bridge and watch the pine logs shooting from the narrow wooden troughs, in which they are guided from the saw-mills surrounding the upper part of the falls to take a final header into the whirlpool below

the bridge, from which, after a few seconds' immersion, they "bob up serenely," to float away unheeded, and apparently uncared for, on the broad bosom of the suddenly placid river.

The shower-bath above mentioned is a great curiosity, consisting of a light wooden shanty, built on a rock in the very centre of the falls, over the roof of which a stream of water of tremendous velocity is conveyed by a trough. The shanty is divided into several compartments, in each of which are three pipes of varying dimensions. The first of these is terminated by a rose like that of a huge watering-pot, the second being a short tube of about four inches in diameter, and the third a similar tube of about twice the size. The impact of the water from these pipes is startling: under the third it gives a blow like that from a sledge-hammer, and the bather who is hardy enough to support it, experiences at once the luxury

of a shower-bath in combination with vigorous shampooing.

We spent the greater part of the morning in exploring the wonders of the falls, the Half being gallantly escorted by an *employé* of one of the saw-mills along a perilous-looking path, composed of planks laid along the sloping roof of a shed, to a point immediately over the largest fall, from which it required a steady head to look down into the headlong swoop of the tons of falling water.

The people at the hotel evidently expected us to leave by the first train in the morning, as is, no doubt, the practice of the majority of their guests, and seemed quite surprised that we were not in a hurry to depart. Learning, however, that the ill-health of the Half necessitated a day or two's rest, their sympathy knew no bounds, and expressed itself in a variety of little attentions which were very pleasant to receive. Special dishes were cooked unbidden, in order,

if possible, to tempt her delicate appetite; and, as a last resource, handfuls of roses were gathered for her from the quaint old garden, in their anxiety to do something to alleviate her sufferings. Another night of perfect rest, however, did much to restore her to her wonted health, and the next day she professed herself equal to a little ramble.

In the morning, our host good naturedly suggested that we ought to go and see the Hofsfos, a splendid waterfall within half an hour's walk, and after dinner we put this advice into execution. Following the right bank of the river for about a mile and a half, we came to a really magnificent fall, one of the very finest we had seen. It is of a perfect horseshoe shape, and the volume of water is immense, the clouds of spray being visible from a great distance. Just below the fall the river is spanned by a bridge, a little distance from which is situated a large factory, by which the valuable water-power is utilized.

We found a seat on a grassy bank overlooking the fall, from which we enjoyed the scene for some time in solitude, till a bell rang, and the workmen began to troop forth from the factory, saluting us courteously as they passed.

Dick accosted a group of these, who had seated themselves on the grass a little distance from us and were enjoying their pipes, and inquired the way to the Svinefos, another fall higher up the river, with a dim intention of prolonging our walk in that direction, and perhaps of reaching it if it were not too far. Whilst he was struggling to understand half a dozen willing replies proffered at once from as many grimy mouths, a good-looking young fellow appeared upon the scene, who was evidently a manager or overlooker of the works, and who, on learning the nature of our inquiry, promptly faced about and led the way to a little gate, through which the path entered a magnificent pine wood, with, as we thought,

the intention of giving us directions how to proceed. This, however, did not at all accord with a Norseman's notions of his duty to strangers; and, ushering us through the gate with marked politeness, he installed himself at our head as guide, and strode along with an easy swing, to keep up with which we had to step out briskly.

The day was excessively hot, and the pace soon began to tell on us; but we now felt in honour bound to proceed.

About half-way through the wood we came to a marshy bit of road, over which a few branches were laid, affording a somewhat precarious footing. In crossing this the Half, being left to her own devices for a moment, managed to slip and plunged ankle-deep into the mire, to the huge distress of the gallant Norseman, who hurried to the rescue with a scornful glance at Dick, as the negligent author of the calamity. The Half having been extricated and cleaned

up with fern leaves by her chivalrous escort, to the great detriment of his own immaculate wristbands, we once more resumed our route, the thunder of the waterfall being now distinctly heard, and its spray being visible through the trees.

After a brisk uphill walk of about half an hour, we reached a cottage, where our guide halted to make inquiries, and through the garden of which he eventually led us to the brow of a pine-clad precipice, down which it was necessary to scramble in order to obtain a view of the fall. This was more than the Half could attempt; and Dick, who felt bound to go even at the risk of his neck, had to be frequently beholden to the strong arm of his guide for support. According to his report, the surroundings of the fall were exceedingly beautiful, but the fall itself not nearly so fine as the Hofsfos. Dick and his companion regained the top safely, to the great relief of

the Half, who, clinging to a friendly pine, had watched their perilous descent with many tremors.

Our destiny being thus accomplished, we commenced the return journey at the same rapid pace, our guide pausing at the entrance to the wood to annex a long plank from a heap lying by the roadside, which he dragged along with him for half a mile or so, as if he intended to take it home for firewood. On reaching the bog, however, his design became evident, the plank being carefully thrown across, and the Half escorted over it with as much ceremony as if she were dancing a minuet. On reaching the factory, we shook hands with our generous escort, and, having carefully watched him out of sight, subsided on the grass in a state of utter collapse. By-and-by we recovered sufficiently to pick ourselves up and crawl wearily back to the hotel, the neuralgia being entirely put to flight by

the fatigue induced by the heat and unwonted exercise.

In the evening, Dick was attempting in his best Norse to recount our adventures to the landlord, when a word or two dropped by the latter betrayed a knowledge of English which with native politeness he had hitherto carefully concealed, in order, no doubt, to allow us the opportunity of displaying our linguistic attainments. The fountains of his reserve were, however, now broken up, and he chatted away volubly in English, informing us that he had been a sailor for many years, and was well acquainted with most of the English ports and many of those in the colonies.

After our last experience, the Half declined to risk any more driving, and we determined to take the train to Christiania on the following day, which would allow us a couple of days for the sights and wonders of the capital before embarking on the *Angelo*, on board

which handsome vessel our berths homeward had been secured for the 8th of August.

After dinner next day, we accordingly bid a hearty farewell to our kind entertainers, the hostess running to the garden at the last moment to cull the few remaining roses for her departing guest, and the two-o'clock train bore us away from Hönefos with, in spite of the unfortunate circumstances of our visit, most pleasant recollections, both of the place and of its kind-hearted people.

The railway journey to Christiania is very tedious, occupying nearly six hours and a half; and although the scenery is sufficiently picturesque and diversified, the attention of the traveller is too much occupied by holding on with both hands to the cane-bottomed seat of the carriage, in order to avoid being pitched through the window by its violent oscillations, to thoroughly enjoy the beauties of nature.

The railway travelling in this primitive

country is, indeed, except on the line from Bergen to Vossevangen, almost as bad as riding in a springless stolkjærre; and we regretted too late not having taken the beautiful drive to Christiania through Homledal and Sandviken, which might have been done in the same time as the roundabout railway journey.

At Drammen we had to change carriages, and here we encountered a real novelty—the only drunken man we had seen in Norway, and he turned out to be a Dane!

We reached Christiania about half-past eight, and drove at once to the Victoria Hotel, where we were fortunate enough to secure a most comfortable room, and, finding our portmanteau awaiting us, hastened to change our travel-stained garments for others a little less disreputable, before joining the irreproachably attired tourists in the quaintly decorated balcony, which serves as a breakfast and supper room.

The great feature of Christiania is the Victoria Hotel; and the principal feature of the hotel, next to its admirable cuisine and management, is the sparrows, which invade the *al frcsco* breakfast-room with a tameness which almost amounts to impertinence, hopping about the tables and perching on the backs of the chairs with the greatest *sang-froid*, and being universally petted and fed by the admiring visitors. The utter fearlessness of the feathered tribe generally is indeed a characteristic feature of Norway, and speaks volumes for the kindliness of its people.

It would be only fair to suppose that, at the time of our visit, Christiania was out of town; for, in spite of the magnificent weather, the whole place seemed pervaded by a spirit of dulness. The streets are ugly, consisting to a great extent of gaunt-looking stone houses, interspersed with frequent vacant lots waiting for the builder; the shops uglier; and the people

ugliest of all; whilst the royal palace and the park surrounding it are quite painful in their hideousness. After an hour or two spent in wandering about the uninteresting streets, we were glad to take refuge in the busy and animated courtyard of the hotel, where all the life of the place seemed to centre.

In the afternoon we drove to the Oscarshall, a little toy palace, in which the King of Sweden and Norway spends the greater part of the three months which, by the constitution of his realm, he is expected to devote to residence in his second capital, and, no doubt, he is jolly glad when they are over, and he can get back to the gaiety of Stockholm. The drive is very pretty, and the view of the Christiania Fiord, from the top of the palace, exceedingly fine. A museum in the grounds contains some very interesting antiquities in the way of costume and furniture, and should on no account be missed.

The *Angelo* sailed at five on the following afternoon (Friday), and we were not at all sorry to get away from Christiania, though the comforts and attention we received at the Victoria might have reconciled us to a sojourn in a worse place, but we could not very well spend the whole of our time in the hotel.

The *Angelo* is a fine ship, fitted up with all the comforts of a well-appointed home, including a bath-room, a piano, and a squalling baby. An attempt was made to induce the steward to suppress the latter by means of the bath-room, but the bribe offered was unfortunately not sufficiently high, and it made the nights hideous by its fretful howling.

The passage home was remarkably smooth and rapid, deck quoits and horse-billiards being kept up the whole day through on Saturday; and at six on Sunday evening we landed at Hull, and betook ourselves at once to the luxurious Station Hotel, in which we carefully

secluded ourselves till the morning express should bear us back to our dear, delightful, dirty London. Our bill in the morning, we need hardly say, amounted to a figure which would have kept us comfortably for a week in our much-regretted Norway.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCLUSION.

IN these few "trivial fond records," we have endeavoured to show that Norway is no longer the half-savage and inaccessible country which it is often supposed to be, and which, in fact, it was until within the last few years; and that much of its most impressive and remarkable scenery may now be explored in the space of three or four weeks with ease and comfort.

Hardships there are in plenty for those who care to encounter them, but they must be sought for, and will certainly not be met with on the much-frequented roads which connect the principal points of interest.

Of course the sportsman who goes plodding after reindeer, or the fisherman who courts unfrequented waters, must go further afield, and will often have to put up with quarters of the roughest, and food of the most meagre and scanty description; but the posting-stations on all the main routes are, as a rule, comfortable little inns, in which no lack of provisions need be anticipated. The traveller must, however, be prepared for the constant recurrence of eggs and fish as the staple of his diet, meat being seldom forthcoming, except at the mid-day dinner. These simple viands, at any rate, are generally of the best and freshest description; and the coffee is superb.

The cost of carrioling is an expensive item in Norwegian travelling, and may be roughly estimated at twenty öre per kilometer (two-thirds of an English mile); that is, fifteen öre for the horse, two öre for the carriole, and a gratuity of about three öre per kilometer for

the postboy. The stations are generally from ten to fifteen kilometers apart; and the postboy, who will almost always state the exact fare, is paid on dismissing him. Should any doubt arise as to the sum due, it may be settled by reference to the "dagbog," kept at the station, at the beginning of which a table of the legal fares is given. For two persons in one conveyance the fare is only half as much again as for one, a considerable saving being thus effected.

The best form of luggage is a box of about thirty-four inches in length and fifteen in width, which is the utmost that can be conveniently strapped to the backboard of a carriole, where it is utilized as a seat by the postboy.

Anything of more bulky dimensions than those specified must of necessity be left behind when driving, unless the traveller goes to the expense of a lumbering "trille," or pair-horse carriage, which, however, may sometimes

be taken with advantage on the great posting roads to Christiania.

The best time to go to Norway is certainly in June, or the beginning of July, although favourable weather is often experienced till the end of August. Plenty of wraps should be taken, as the cold in the more exposed passes and on board the steamers is frequentlyvery great.

A very comfortable and not at all cumbersome form of rough-weather clothing for either sex consists of a woollen Cardigan jacket, supplemented by a waterproof overcoat or ulster. A first-rate waterproof, consisting of two thicknesses of cashmere with a light film of india-rubber between them, is manufactured by Messrs. Currie, Thompson & Co., formerly of Ludgate Hill, now of 84, Newgate Street; and was found by us to be in every respect admirable. It is both light and strong, and altogether devoid of the "drawing" properties of the ordinary macintosh.

For the selection of a route and information as to distances, etc., the traveller should consult Bædeker, though he cannot go far wrong if he makes Bergen his headquarters, from which picturesque old town he may easily explore both the Hardanger and the Sogne Fiords, and then take the "overland" route *viâ* Faleide to Molde, returning thence to Bergen by steamer, or *vice versâ*.

The Vöringfos and the Skæggedalsfos, two of the most renowned waterfalls, are both within easy distance of Bergen, but the latter is said to be not worth the trouble of the very fatiguing climb necessary to reach it. It has, however, been described as the "grandest cataract in Europe," and even compared to Niagara itself—to the intense disgust of some of our travelling acquaintances, who had been deluded by this glowing description into undertaking an excessively hard day's work with most disappointing results. The appreciation

of scenery, however, depends very much on the hues imparted to it by the beholder's spectacles, and almost any two travellers will come away from the same scene with widely different impressions. We were regretting having missed the Hardanger Fiord, the beauty of which we had heard extolled to the skies, when two gentlemen, who had just come from thence, reported that "it was really not worth going to see;"—of the truth of this verdict we hope to judge for ourselves on a future occasion, but at the time it was inexpressibly comforting.

It is a pity that Bergen cannot be reached from London without the fatiguing railway journey to Hull or Newcastle, as it is by far the best centre from which to explore the beauties of Norway. The fares of the Wilson line of steamers are excessively high (£3 3*s.* for a voyage of two days, *not including provisions*, seems exorbitant), and as the attractions of Norway are yearly becoming more widely

appreciated, it is to be hoped that ere long some firm of shipowners will be found enterprising enough to compete with them for a share of this lucrative monopoly.

There remains only to add that in going to Norway, as was remarked to us before starting by a stranger who had observed us changing English money into Norwegian, "you are going amongst the nicest people in the world;" and to counsel the intending traveller —not to race through the country in the vain attempt to see it all in one visit; to avoid Hull, Christiania, and Halifax; and finally, to ensure a thorough enjoyment of the tour, to go if possible as *One and a Half.*

THE END.

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